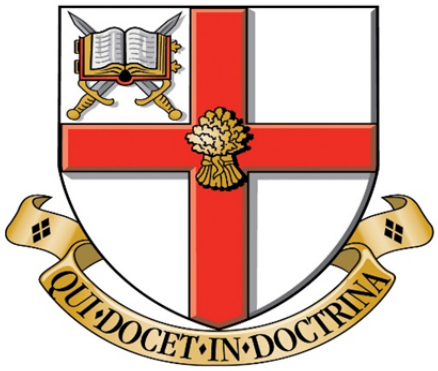


University of Chester

# The Woman Author-Editor and the Negotiation of Professional Identity, 1850 - 1880

**Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy by Georgina Ellen O'Brien Hill.**

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**Contents**

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This thesis is dedicated with love and fondness to the memory of my father.

**Abstract**

**The Woman Author-Editor and the Negotiation of Professional Identity, 1850–1880, Georgina Ellen O'Brien Hill**

This thesis examines the professional identities of three Victorian novelists, George Eliot (1819-1880), Charlotte Yonge (1823-1901) and Florence Marryat (1837-1899), all of whom worked as editors between 1850 and 1880. I explore the practices that these women adopted as journalists in order to survive, and indeed thrive, within a male-dominated literary marketplace, revealing a number of strategies in common as well as some important differences. I also consider how these author-editors represented the experience of the female artist-professional in their fiction, demonstrating that each woman figured the mid-Victorian ideal of domesticity as useful when seeking to negotiate a public identity within a challenging professional climate. Working in the press during a period which has been described as a 'golden age of women's journalism,' these writers nevertheless faced numerous challenges. The purpose of this thesis is to examine why George Eliot, Charlotte Yonge and Florence Marryat found useful the particular practices they chose when editing and writing fiction within the context of this rapidly changing climate. By examining this very diverse sample of writers, I demonstrate how women responded to the demands of the mid-Victorian periodical press, and their role within it, through the practices of anonymity, male pseudonyms, signature and posing as amateurs. The Introduction examines the nature of the professional/amateur divide at mid-century, and demonstrates how women could usefully subvert domestic ideology to position themselves as amateurs and thus covertly enter the public sphere. I offer an overview of research into the periodical press, as well as the position of the woman journalist. In the second part of my Introduction, I introduce the magazines that Eliot, Yonge and Marryat edited, describing a typical issue and offering important contextual information. Chapter One looks at George Eliot's editorship of *The Westminster Review* (1852-1854), arguing that while Eliot adopted the tactic of anonymity and pseudonymity she nevertheless developed the persona of an 'editress' through her private correspondence. Chapter One examines the ideal of women's literary professionalism that Eliot developed through the articles she published in *The Westminster Review*, based upon the values of hard work, training and excellence, and how this was then reflected in her representation of the female artist-professional in her fiction in texts as diverse as *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1858) and *Daniel Deronda*

(1876). Chapter Two explores Charlotte Yonge's editorship of *The Monthly Packet* (1851-1899) and the lesser-known privately circulated magazine *The Barnacle* (1863-1867). I examine Yonge's practice of signature and posing as an amateur, as well as her editorial character of 'Mother Goose,' arguing that Yonge shared many of Eliot's ideals of literary professionalism and that this is reflected in novels such as *Dynevor Terrace* (1857) and *The Clever Woman of the Family* (1865). In Chapter Three, I examine Florence Marryat's editorship of *London Society* (1872-1876). I explore Marryat's practice of signature, posing as an amateur when new to her profession and her editorial character of the 'spiritualist editress,' arguing that like Yonge, Marryat's vision of women's professionalism was similar to that of Eliot and that this was reflected in her representation of the female artist-professional in texts such as *Her World Against a Lie* (1878) and *My Sister the Actress* (1881). Despite writing for very different markets, what emerges from the fiction of all three author-editors is an idealised combination of posing as an amateur and skilful performance as an artist. Drawing on original archival research, this thesis recovers their hitherto under-researched editorial work, prompting a reconsideration of the canonical work of George Eliot, stressing the significance of the more familiar work of Charlotte Yonge and introducing Florence Marryat as an important but neglected literary figure.

## Introduction

This thesis examines the professional identities of three Victorian novelists, George Eliot, Charlotte Yonge and Florence Marryat, all of whom worked as editors of periodicals. In the chapters that follow my purpose is two-fold. Firstly, I explore the practices that these women adopted as journalists in order to survive, and indeed thrive, within a male-dominated literary marketplace, revealing a number of strategies in common, as well as some important differences. Secondly, I consider how these women then explored the experience of the female artist-professional through their fiction.[1] By examining this very diverse sample of writers, I demonstrate how women responded to the demands of the mid-Victorian periodical press, and their role within it, through the practices of anonymity, male pseudonyms, signature and posing as amateurs. Working in the press from the 1850s to the 1880s, which has been described as a 'golden age of women's journalism', these writers nevertheless faced significant challenges as the debate over signature intensified in the 1860s.[2] Catherine Judd has identified this as the 'cult of authorship and the commodification of the signature',[3] conditions which made it increasingly difficult for many women to find refuge in publishing anonymously. The purpose of this thesis is to examine why Eliot, Yonge and Marryat found their chosen professional practices useful when editing journals and writing fiction within the context of a rapidly changing literary culture.

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[1] I am borrowing Jennifer Ruth's term, the 'artist-professional', here (see Jennifer Ruth, *Novel Professions: Interested Disinterest and the Making of the Professional in the Victorian Novel* (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University Press, 2006), p.8). Linda Lewis defines the woman 'artist' as poets, painters, actresses, musicians and novelists (see Linda Lewis, *Germaine de Staël, George Eliot, and the Victorian Woman Artist*, (Columbia, Missouri, Missouri University Press, 2003), p.11). Patricia Zakreski describes the woman artist as those who sew, paint, write and act (see Patricia Zakreski *Representing Female Artistic Labour, 1848 – 1890: Refining Work for the Middle-Class Woman* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p.15).

[2] See Alexis Easley, *First-Person Anonymous: Women Writers and Victorian Print Media, 1830 – 1870* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p.5.

[3] Catherine A. Judd, 'Male pseudonyms and female authority in Victorian England', in John O. Jordon and Robert L. Pattern (eds), *Literature in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century British Publishing and Reading Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.255.

The terms 'professional' and 'amateur' need to be examined in detail because the distinction between them was far from clear when George Eliot began her career as a writer. In his discussion of the increasing divide between the professional and the amateur in the nineteenth century, N. N. Feltes suggests that:

> [t]he modern uses of the terms [professional and amateur], as opposites, arose in the early nineteenth century: "amateur" as "one who cultivates anything as a pasttime [*sic*] as distinguished from one who presents it professionally." […] Each term not only defined itself as a positive value against the other, but apparently from the beginning each also might itself be used disparagingly, "amateur" for a dabbler or a superficial worker, and "professional" for "one who makes a trade" of anything that is properly pursued from higher motives.[4]

As Feltes's definition makes clear, the terms 'professional' and 'amateur' could have both positive and negative connotations, depending on the context. Feltes's definition echoes that given by the *Oxford English Dictionary* which classifies the professional as a person who 'engages in a specified occupation or activity for money or as a means of earning a living, rather than as a pastime', noting that the term is 'sometimes applied disparagingly to a person who makes a trade or profession of something usually associated with higher motives'.[5] An amateur, by contrast, is defined as 'one who cultivates anything as a pastime, as distinguished from one who prosecutes it professionally; hence, sometimes used disparagingly, as dabbler, or superficial student or worker'.[6]

Penelope Corfield's *Power and the Professions in Britain* (2000) confirms Feltes's reading of the complexity of the professionalism debate at this time:

> the concept of a profession emerged as a superior form of toil, since it entailed a 'calling' to a specialist occupation. It came to represent a form of employment that was dignified, expert and socially admired. […] Moreover,

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[4] N. N. Feltes, *Modes of Production of Victorian Novels* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1986), p.41.
[5] *Oxford English Dictionary Online,* [http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50189445?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=professional&first=1&max_to_show=10 , accessed 2 March 2009].
[6] *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, [http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50006818?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=amateur&first=1&max_to_show=10 , accessed 2 March 2009].

> in other employments, 'amateurism' became a term of disparagement. It implied a dilettante approach and slapdash execution. 'Amateurism is the curse of the nineteenth century', snorted a satirical journal dismissively in 1868. 'Professionalism', on the other hand, was acquiring connotations of careful training, organisation, dedication, sleek efficiency and *esprit de corps.*[7]

As a consequence of this, the mid-century saw the creation of formal bodies such as the Society of Authors (1843) and the Guild of Literature and Art (1851) in an attempt to professionalise and unionise the literary arts, thus aligning them with the better established professions of medicine, the law and the clergy. However, as Corfield notes, these societies relied heavily on voluntary membership, had very limited support, and the Society of Authors was not initially open for women to join.[8] Women writers, therefore, were increasingly aligned within the domestic space, and the amateur, rather than the public forum offered by these societies. To put it another way, '"woman writer" and "professional" were constructed as contradictory concepts'.[9]

This context helps us to appreciate that the terms 'amateur' and 'professional' were in fact very fluid concepts that were being discussed, debated, defined and redefined, for almost every occupation, not just the arts. As Jennifer Ruth has pointed out in *Novel Professions*, 'various disciplines, including fiction-writing, began to professionalize' at this time.[10] Susan Colón agrees, suggesting that 'advocates of the professions sought to explain their own professionalization in terms of public service while fending off often satirical criticism of their alleged self-interestedness [i.e. economic gain]'.[11] The professions as a form of public service is a recurrent theme in

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[7] Penelope J. Corfield, *Power and the Professions in Britain 1700-1850* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.85.
[8] Corfield, *Power and the Professions*, p.85.
[9] N. N. Feltes, 'One Round of a Long Ladder: Gender, Profession and the Production of *Middlemarch*', *English Studies in Canada*, vol. 12 (1986), p.216.
[10] Ruth, *Novel Professions*, p.4.
[11] Susan E. Colón, '"One Function in Particular": Professionalism and Specialization in *Daniel Deronda*', *Studies in the Novel,* vol. 37, no. 3 (Fall 2005), p.292.

the fiction of Eliot, Yonge and Marryat. In an article on authorship, published in 1892, Yonge wrote that:

> We sometimes hear of amateur authors. What this means at the present day there is no knowing. In former times it was clear enough. It was the persons who had something to say and were desirous of saying it to the public at their own cost; nay, who thought it almost derogatory to accept any remuneration. […] But there is no one who is not willing to obtain, if not appropriate, the profits of the sale that is hoped for as a testimony of success; and there are great numbers of writers, not always dependent on their earnings, but finding them an important addition to their income, and thus becoming more and more professional.[12]

The 'former times' which Yonge referred to here may well be a reference to the height of her own success as an author, the 1850s and 1860s.[13] Her comments are particularly pertinent to my discussion because Yonge highlights that the term 'amateur' had only relatively recently started to have negative connotations. For Yonge, to be an 'amateur' had a class implication; it implied the dignity of not needing to accept payment for writing. This passage from 'Authorship' also highlights that the opposition between amateur and professional was one that was evolving.[14] As George Henry Lewes's article 'The Lady Novelists' (1852) illustrates, the success of women writers, whom he described as an army scribbling away in their drawing rooms, exposed the fact that the boundary between amateur and professional was an artificial construction, reflecting the artificial nature of the separate spheres ideology that fuelled this separation.[15] In other words, the very success of professional women writers, whose place in the home was so compatible with authorship, indicated the artificiality of the separate spheres ideology, so carefully constructed in influential

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[12] Charlotte Yonge, 'Authorship', in Georgina Battiscombe and Marghanita Laski (eds), *A Chaplet for Charlotte Yonge* (London: Camelot, 1965), p.185. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

[13] June Sturrock has identified the 1850s and 1860s as 'the period of [Yonge's] greatest success as a popular religious novelist'. June Sturrock, 'Sequels, Series and Sensation Novels: Charlotte Yonge and the Popular-Fiction Market of the 1850s and 1860s', in Paul Budra and Betty A. Schellenbery (eds), *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p.102.

[14] See Feltes, *Modes of Production*, p.41.

[15] [G. H. Lewes], 'The Lady Novelists', *Westminster Review*, vol. 58 (July 1852), pp.129-241.

works like John Ruskin's 'Of Queens' Gardens' (1865).[16] Public and private, professional and amateur; the increasing success of the woman writer confounded these gendered binaries. Yet, as Patricia Zakreski has recently pointed out, while feminist criticism has tended to focus upon the separate spheres ideology as immobilising and restrictive, the spheres were in fact flexible spaces and fluid concepts: 'Homes were described as workplaces and workplaces as homes. Domesticity and work were not merely specific activities associated with particular places, [they were] mutable qualities that could be manipulated by working women in order to justify increasingly professional careers'.[17]

Deirdre David points out the 'disposition of [early] Victorian intellectuals to cherish amateurism rather than aspire to professionalism',[18] and while Yonge used amateurism as a positive term, to be called an amateur could prove insulting to one's developing professional status. George Eliot, for example, was outraged when Thomas Huxley wrote 'sneeringly of Lewes's amateurishness', in a book review for the *Westminster Review* in which he called Lewes a mere 'experimental scientist'.[19] However, both terms were used pejoratively about women, as Lyn Pykett notes:

> Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Ellen Wood, Rhoda Broughton, Ouida, etc. were all clearly 'professional' in the sense that they earned their living from producing fiction. As applied to these women writers, 'professionalism' was invariably a denigratory term. The (female) 'professional' wrote to order, according to set formulae, in order to satisfy markets. The (male) 'artist', on the other hand, exercised a vocation and wrote out of an inner (rather than pecuniary) need. However, because they were women, Braddon and others had, paradoxically, also to be regarded as amateurs. They were women first, and writers second.[20]

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[16] For more on Ruskin and 'the correct employment of woman's minds', see Deirdre David, *Intellectual Women and Victorian Patriarchy: Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, George Eliot* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), p.14.
[17] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.187.
[18] Deirdre David, *Intellectual Women and Victorian Patriarchy*, p.8.
[19] Thomas Huxley, 'Contemporary Literature: Science', cited in Rosemary Ashton, *142 Strand: A Radical Address in Victorian London* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2006), p.189. Despite Eliot's protests, made both in person and by correspondence, John Chapman published the review, only slightly modified.
[20] Lyn Pykett, *The Improper Feminine: The Woman's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.201.

Therefore, literary women like Eliot, Yonge and Marryat could on the one hand be dismissed as 'professional', as long as 'professional' signified those relying for their income on writing (as these three women certainly did). On the other hand, they could also be dismissed as amateurs 'because they were women'. So for authors like Eliot, women's literary professionalism had to conform to the right kind of (male) professionalism that was being advocated within high culture.

As Yonge's comments in 'Authorship' imply, the notions of amateur and professional often signified a class issue, as is evident from the 'Dignity of Literature' debate of 1850. Writers such as Thackeray were agonising over the distinction between authorship as a necessary, but demeaning way of earning a living, and as a creative vocation that rises above such monetary concerns.[21] For writers like Thackeray, the artist could not easily reconcile these seemingly oppositional aspects of authorship. But gender, as well as class, formed part of this debate. Catherine Gallagher argues that '[w]hen women entered the career of authorship, they did not enter an inappropriately male territory, but a degradingly female one. They did not need to find a female metaphor for authorship; they needed to avoid or transform the one that was already there', that is, women in particular needed to avoid association with the marketplace to sidestep the already current 'metaphor of the author as whore'.[22] For example, Thackeray 'particularly disliked the feminizing of literary

[21] See Craig Howes, '*Pendennis* and the Controversy on the "Dignity of Literature"', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, vol. 41, no. 3 (December 1986), pp. 269-298, for a useful summary of Thackeray's changing perspective on 'The Dignity of Literature' through an analysis of *Pendennis* (1848-1850) and also Daniel Hack, 'Literary Paupers and Professional Authors: The Guild of Literature and Art', *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, vol. 39, no. 4 (1999) pp.691-713, who also considers Thackeray's position within this debate.

[22] Catherine Gallagher, 'George Eliot and *Daniel Deronda*: The Prostitute and the Jewish Question' in Ruth Bernard Yeazell (ed.), *Sex, Politics and Science in the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), p.40.

work', and made a point of taking a stand against the 'effeminate sentimentality of Dickens', while seeking to 'construct writing as manly labour'.[23]

Commentators in the periodical press often discussed professionalism in gendered terms, differentiating the 'amateur' efforts of the woman writer from those of her 'professional' male counterpart, for, as Bronwyn Rivers has suggested, there was a sense that '[m]iddle-class working women' like those considered in this thesis, 'threatened to usurp masculine professional privilege, and they potentially endangered male job markets'.[24] As Bette London has pointed out, '[i]f for men, amateurism could be read as a mark of class status, and intellectual autonomy, for women it did not carry the same positive connotations'.[25] As such, 'amateurism' eventually became 'marked as feminine'.[26] As the 'professional' was increasingly masculinised at mid-century and associated with the public sphere so, Mary Poovey argues, the 'amateur' became feminised and associated with the domestic.[27] But for the middle-class woman seeking work, this was an association that could be advantageous, for it was compatible with the separate spheres ideology that located women's authority within the home.[28]

At the moment when male authors were calling for literature to be regarded as seriously as other professions, George Eliot was calling for female authors to engage with this debate, exploring what it meant to be a female artist-professional in articles such as 'Woman in France: Madame de Sablé' (1854) and 'Silly Novels by Lady

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[23] Clare Pettit, *Patent Inventions: Intellectual Property and the Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.210.
[24] Bronwyn Rivers, *Women at Work in the Victorian Novel* (Lampeter, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press: 2005), p.8.
[25] Bette London, *Writing Double: Women's Literary Partnerships* (Ithaca, New York and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), p.98.
[26] London, *Writing Double,* p.113.
[27] Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (London: Virago, 1989), p.125.
[28] Poovey, *Uneven Developments,* p.125.

Novelists' (1856).[29] Emerging as a professional herself at the time she wrote these articles, Eliot described an ideal of professionalism, something that Susan Colón has identified as Eliot's 'professional construct'.[30] Eliot's ideal combined what she saw as the 'masculine' traits of 'vigor', breadth' and 'culture' with the feminine skills of 'subtlety of perception', 'quickness of sensibility' and 'tenderness'.[31] For Eliot, a truly cultured writer was one who was capable of 'superadd[ing]' the masculine traits to the feminine, and further, able to perfect their writing through hard work, research and the pursuit of excellence.[32]

However, for authors like Charlotte Yonge and Florence Marryat, writers of popular genres, Eliot's high culture model was not achievable. Furthermore, the association between the amateur and the domestic sphere did not necessarily lead to disempowerment:

> if the feminization of authorship derived its authority from an ideal representation of woman and the domestic sphere, then for a woman to depart from that idealization by engaging in commercial business was to collapse the boundary between the [separate] spheres […]. A woman who wrote for publication threatened to collapse the ideal from which her authority was derived.[33]

So, an association with the home in fact provided a kind of literary authority which women writers were able to exploit in a way that their male colleagues could not. For the woman author, 'the process of negotiation enabled them to use the qualities of feminine writing to define a specifically female space in the professional, public sphere in terms that were not likely to become socially prejudicial to them'.[34] Indeed, Bette London's fascinating research into late-Victorian literary collaboration between women has highlighted how collaboration, as a literary practice, could exploit the

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[29] 'Woman in France' and 'Silly Novels' henceforth.
[30] Colón, '"One Function in Particular"', p.295.
[31] [George Eliot], 'Belles Lettres', *The Westminster Review*, vol. 67 (1857), p.306.
[32] [Eliot], 'Belles Lettres', p.306.
[33] Poovey, *Uneven Developments*, p.125.
[34] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour,* p.138.

'guise' of 'amateurism' in order to enable women to 'slip into a professional position'.[35]

The paradox of the 'Dignity of Literature' debate was that 'the Victorian artist-professional underscored his position as market agent as often as he obscured it'.[36] Referring to what Barbara Herrnstein Smith has called the 'double discourse of value', Jennifer Ruth has pointed out that sometimes 'the literary professional pretended to be engaged in aesthetics when in fact he was driven by economics'.[37] Eliot's protest in 'Silly Novels' that vanity and greed detracted from artistic value can be read as an example of such a pretence: in her early career, Eliot needed to earn money to support herself as well as Lewes's estranged wife and children. This 'double discourse of value' also had implications in terms of class, for the notion of the gentleman amateur whose writing was his vocation, not the sole source of his income, clashed with the concept of the middle-class professional who needed to sell his writing to make a living.

As I discuss later in this introduction, both Charlotte Yonge and Florence Marryat created homely public personas that served to define their writing as a 'pastime' or a hobby, but this representation of their work was in tension with their status as 'one who presents it [i.e. their pastime] professionally' and, more importantly, one who gets paid, for both were successful author-editors.[38] This is the tension that lies at the heart of the professionalism debate. Eliot tried to reconcile these opposites by urging women to adopt the qualities of both sexes, bringing feminine emotion and empathy to highbrow fiction. Yonge and Marryat, on the other

[35] London, *Writing Double*, p.104.
[36] Ruth, *Novel Professions*, p.8.
[37] Barbara Herrnstein Smith, cited in Ruth, *Novel Professions,* p.16.
[38] Feltes, *Modes of Production of Victorian Novels*, p.41.

hand, used domestic ideology to their advantage by creating suitably feminine personas that were compatible with their market.

Professional work was increasingly defined at mid-century by its association with the public sphere, with office space, clubs and places of formal education and training. Indeed, as June Sturrock notes, the editors of *The Englishwoman's Journal* set themselves up in offices in Langham Place so that their work would be viewed as 'professional' and 'non-domestic'.[39] Middle-class women seeking work, unable to access easily such spaces, were forced deeper into the private sphere. Yet the very presence of literary women, and their success in the marketplace, suggested that professionalism could also be located within the home, a space that was still very much identified as woman's sphere. In other words, women like Yonge and Marryat may have been forced to associate their professional identities with the domestic sphere, but they managed to use that position to their advantage. Furthermore, the uncertainty surrounding their position as professionals did not necessarily have a completely negative impact: where there is uncertainty, there is room for manoeuvre, and these women were writing at a time when their roles and identities were continually being defined and redefined.

Zakreski suggests that while recent scholars like Mary Poovey and Monica Cohen 'identify the strategies through which the rhetoric of the domestic ideal was called upon to justify the expansion of women's sphere to include paid work', they do not sufficiently address what Anne Digby has called 'gender borderlands',[40] these being 'spaces in which middle-class women could safely enter and manipulate the

[39] June Sturrock, 'Establishing Identity: Editorial Correspondence from the Early Years of *The Monthly Packet*', in *Victorian Periodicals Review,* vol. 39, no. 3 (Fall 2006), p.274.
[40] Anne Digby, 'Victorian Values and Women in Public and Private', cited in Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.7.

public world without overstepping the bounds of their "domestic territory."'[41] The periodical press, which allowed women to publish anonymously or under the cover of pseudonymity, was one of these 'gendered borderlands'. For Zakreski, women's professionalism at mid-century was described through a process of defining women's work as 'inherently refined', so that the female professional was figured in terms of 'respectability and moral value outside dominant social and economic structures'.[42] Zakreski argues that through 'gendered borderlands', women's work was not only represented as 'refined by reference to the domestic ideal, but also came to be seen as an experience with intrinsic refining qualities'.[43] Through this process, work which had once been considered as degrading for the middle-class woman (most notably, acting) came to be seen in terms of suitable professions.

Susan Colón has suggested that although there is a significant body of research addressing the Victorian concept of the professional from a historical and sociological perspective, these studies tend to include women writers, or the fictional representation of women writers, only as a small part of a wider focus.[44] Yet feminist scholars have engaged with the question of women's literary professionalism in some detail. Ruth identifies the genre of the novel as adding significantly to this process of definition at mid-century, suggesting that 'the novel attempted to "theorize" the professional, trying to do what nonfiction failed to do'.[45] However, Ruth's analysis does not adequately emphasise the extent to which gender formed an important component of this process. In an attempt to bridge this gap, I examine the fictional construction of the female artist-professional in the second part of each of the chapters that follow. Current criticism on women and the professions has moved a long way

[41] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.15.
[42] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, pp.15-16.
[43] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.8.
[44] Colón, '"One Function in Particular"', p.295.
[45] Ruth, *Novel Professions*, p.4.

from W. J. Reader's reductive claim that '[a]part from teaching and prostitution, there were very few occupations by which [a] Victorian middle-class woman could support herself',[46] and indeed, as Nigel Cross has pointed out, writing was one of the few professions open to women at this time, hence the perceived increase in numbers of professional female writers.[47] This is not, however, to suggest that at mid-century women enjoyed many varied opportunities for professional work, but rather to highlight that their position was not as severely restricted as Reader's comments imply.

A public persona that was linked to the home capitalised on the domestic ideology that represented the home as women's special sphere of authority, and this is what popular writers like Yonge and Marryat exploited. Monica Cohen has identified this practice as a form of 'professional domesticity', a process through which women represented their domestic duty in professional terms, and therefore figured their writing as one of many household tasks. This term, for Cohen, applies to men as well as women, as:

> a temporary means of resolving the oppositions subtending the separate-sphere doctrine […] professional domesticity is an invention of middle-class Victorian women and men who worked at home writing novels and essays that were supposed to be as edifying as they were entertaining, which is to say, as socially useful as personally profitable.[48]

The concept of male 'professional domesticity' is an interesting one that is ripe for exploration; however my interest is in how women defined themselves within such complex, contradictory and evolving ideas. Cohen usefully contextualises professionalism, arguing that Victorian novels cast the 'conception of female morality

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[46] W. J. Reader, *Professional Men: The Rise of the Professional Classes in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), p.167.
[47] Nigel Cross, *The Common Writer*, cited in Pykett, *The Improper Feminine*, p.201. For a discussion of how this perception of an increase in female authors differed from the reality of women being slowly 'edged out' of the market, see Gaye Tuchman and Nina E. Fortin (eds), *Edging Women Out: Victorian Novelists, Publishers, and Social Change* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp.5-7.
[48] Monica F. Cohen, *Professional Domesticity in the Victorian Novel: Women, Work and Home* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.9-10.

into the vocabulary of nineteenth-century professionalism'.[49] She suggests that rather than calling for women to have 'equal rights [in the workplace] because a woman is like a man', the notion of 'professional domesticity implied that a woman should have equal rights because her innate moral property entitles her to them'.[50] Cohen also describes 'amateur professionals', meaning 'amateurs who used the language of professionalism to represent their work as the fulfilment of a higher calling'.[51] However, Cohen's identification of Mirah Lapidoth in *Daniel Deronda* as an amateur professional needs to take into account that the narrative repeatedly emphasises the fact that Mirah gets paid: Mirah has the demeanour of an amateur, while insisting on her right to be paid. *Professional Domesticity* makes important steps toward capturing the complexity of the professional/amateur debate in relation to the woman writer, but what Cohen's definition does not adequately address is the element of performance.[52]

'Authenticity' and 'theatricality' were key terms in the Victorian debate over professionalism, particularly as it related to the artist. As Sarah Bilston has pointed out, for critics like George Henry Lewes, the concept of 'acting self-consciously' and 'acting naturally' constituted the difference between high and low culture on the stage: '[A] natural actor strives for a seamless impersonation that obscures the line between his own personality and the character he represents'.[53] I shall return to this issue in more detail in Chapters One and Three, but for now it is worth noting that in 'Acting Naturally', Lynn M. Voskuil has pointed out that women artists came to represent 'the ideal Lewesian natural player: as guardians of the realms of private feeling (religion, the home), they 'naturally' infuse their domestic roles with the

[49] Cohen, *Professional Domesticity*, p.1.
[50] Cohen, *Professional Domesticity*, p.10.
[51] Cohen, *Professional Domesticity*, p.10.
[52] Cohen, *Professional Domesticity*, p.1.
[53] George Henry Lewes, cited in Sarah Bilston, 'Authentic Performance in Theatrical Women's Fiction of the 1870s', *Women's Writing,* vol. 11, no. 1 (2004), p.41.

requisite Lewesian ideal "truth"'.[54] Because of this element of performance, 'posing' as amateurs is perhaps a more appropriate term for Yonge and Marryat's professional practice, than Cohen's concept 'professional domesticity'.[55] The word 'posing' acknowledges the performance innate in the act of engaging with the public sphere. Yonge and Marryat were clearly professional for they were paid for the writing they produced and had very successful careers. However, both also emphasised their place within the home in order to retain the authority that the domestic sphere afforded them. Describing her work pattern at the height of her journalistic and fiction writing career, Margaret Oliphant claimed that 'writing ran through everything', but, she continued:

> it was also subordinate to everything, to be pushed aside for any little necessity. I had no table even to myself, much less a room to work in, but sat at the corner of the family table with my writing-book, with everything going on as if I had been making a shirt instead of writing a book.[56]

As Cohen has noted, Oliphant's emphasis on the home as the base for her work implies that 'the spheres were not at all separate. […] Oliphant makes the home a workplace'.[57] The practice of posing as an amateur was, then, particularly useful to women writing popular fiction who could present their writing as something of a hobby that fitted in around the more important work of family life, something that Eliot did not acknowledge in 'Silly Novels' because it did not fit her ideal of literary professionalism.

Having explored the complexity of women's literary professionalism, I now consider the practice of anonymity and pseudonymity employed by Victorian women

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[54] Lynn M. Voskuil, 'Acting Naturally: Brontë, Lewes and the Problem of Gender Performance', *ELH* vol. 62, no. 2 (Summer 1995), p.412.
[55] Judith Johnston and Hilary Fraser, 'The Professionalization of Women's Writing', in Joanne Shattock (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.231.
[56] Elisabeth Jay (ed.), *The Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant: The Complete Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.30.
[57] Cohen, *Professional Domesticity*, p.2.

writers. Eliot found anonymity most useful for the highbrow market, when editing the *Westminster Review* (1852-1854), though she did sometimes adopt the persona of an 'editress' in her correspondence, and when publishing her first fiction, *Scenes of Clerical Life* in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (1857). When it was published as a book (1858), Eliot adapted her professional practice to pseudonymity and Ruby Redinger has pointed out that she needed a pseudonym for 'no one would buy the books of the scandalous Marian Evans'.[58] In the conclusion of Chapter One, I examine what it was that Eliot found useful in the practice of retaining a male publishing name whilst being known to be a woman at this point her career. Using contemporary reviews and responses to her work, I argue that by keeping her pseudonym, Eliot was able to retain her unusual position as a female high culture novelist by radically complicating Victorian notions of gender and authorship: some reviewers, for example, were seriously confused in the 1860s about whether they should refer to Eliot as 'he' or 'she'. Eliot was able to create an identity of a 'man-woman', a unique woman with 'male' genius, and thus retain her unusual position within a male-dominated market.[59] She came to be valued as a woman of unique talents, able to write masculine novels, but her career path was unattainable for most women writers.

As Clare Pettit has argued, Eliot had struggled 'to shape a role for herself as a serious literary writer in an increasingly masculinized marketplace',[60] and she achieved this by constructing an identity that was based on 'her need for a "public" sphere not defined economically, but rather as a sphere of moral virtue and high

[58] Ruby V. Redinger, *George Eliot: The Emergent Self* (New York: Knopf, 1975), p.4.
[59] Charles Warren Stoddard, 'George Eliot', *Exits and Entrances: A Book of Essays and Sketches* (Boston, Mass., Lathrop, 1903), pp.143-144.
[60] Clare Pettit, *Patent Inventions*, p.238.

culture'.[61] In the second part of Chapter One, I explore how Eliot exposed the difficulties faced by the female artist-professional, specifically actresses and singers in texts as diverse as the poem *Armgart* (1874) and her last novel *Daniel Deronda* (1876). In both, women's success is commended as long as they are not seen to be overtly enjoying the more public nature of their role. Ironically, therefore, in the light of Eliot's call for women to act as professionals in 'Silly Novels', it is those characters who pose as amateurs who are applauded. Although Eliot's representation of the artist-professional is highly complex, and often contradictory, her fiction ultimately implies that only the woman of genius who learns to mask her ambition can thrive.

Charlotte Yonge began editing *The Monthly Packet* (1851-1899) in the same year that Eliot began editing the *Westminster Review*. However unlike Eliot, whose highbrow writing was aided by a male pseudonym in the late 1850s, Yonge had no need to mask her gender because the fiction that she was writing (popular domestic novels and fiction for juvenile readers) was considered particularly feminine and therefore acceptable for women, evident in the successful careers of authors like Mrs Gatty ('Aunt Judy') and her daughter Juliana Horatia Ewing. Indeed, June Sturrock identifies children's literature as 'traditionally associated with the feminine', though it should be noted that while Yonge did write fiction for young girls, she also published realist fiction aimed at an adult readership.[62] Nicola Diane Thompson notes that Yonge enjoyed a 'remarkably wide audience', and that her novel, *The Heir of Redclyffe* (1853) was 'popular with school-girls, as well as the soldiers fighting the

[61] Pettit, *Patent Inventions,* p.242.
[62] June Sturrock, 'Literary Women of the 1850s and Charlotte Mary Yonge's *Dynevor Terrace*', in Nicola Diane Thompson (ed.), *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.122.

Crimean War'.[63] A 'formidable woman of letters', who penned over two hundred books, Yonge's 'wholesome family stories' typified the genre of popular domestic novel of the 1850s, a 'female-dominated' genre.[64] Importantly, as Monica Correa Fryckstedt points out, some of George Eliot's work was categorised as domestic fiction (including *Middlemarch* (1870-1871), but what distinguishes her from Yonge in terms of cultural value was that Eliot's novels were deemed to be 'cultured', while Yonge's were considered 'popular'.[65] Yonge's success in the 1850s (with novels such as *The Heir of Redclyffe* and *The Daisy Chain* (1856), which was originally serialised in *The Monthly Packet*), gave weight to her reputation as a writer of popular domestic fiction in the 1860s. Yonge, unlike Eliot, was well placed to capitalise on the increasing trend for signature for she had adopted this practise since the beginning of her career. In 1863 Yonge founded a small, privately circulated magazine called *The Barnacle* (1863-1867), and adopting the persona of 'Mother Goose', encouraged young girls to practice journalism in the magazine before graduating to *The Monthly Packet.* In Chapter Two I examine the representation of Yonge as Mother Goose through the illustrations and editorial notes of the *Barnacle*, as well as in the short fiction of *The Monthly Packet*. I have chosen to focus on *The Barnacle* rather than *The Monthly Packet* in order to investigate the pictorial depiction of Yonge as Mother Goose.

Although Yonge did not need anonymity or a pseudonym as Eliot did, she nevertheless found the persona of Mother Goose (with its associated qualities of guidance and nurturing) particularly useful in her role of mentor during the 1860s. Firmly rooted in the domestic sphere (Yonge is figured in one illustration as leaning

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[63] Nicola Diane Thompson, *Reviewing Sex: Gender and the Reception of Victorian Novels* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p.89.
[64] Monica Correa Fryckstedt, 'Defining the Domestic Genre: English Women Novelists of the 1850s', in *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature,* vol. 6, no. 1 (Spring 1987), p.10.
[65] Fryckstedt, 'Defining the Domestic Genre', p.21.

out of a cottage window, see figure 2.a), and associated with the feminine role of child-rearing (in another illustration the editor can be seen whipping her young contributors into shape, see figure 2.c), Mother Goose presented a homely persona, indicating that Yonge's particular brand of women's literary professionalism was defined by paid work conducted at home, justified by emphasising that woman's place is in the domestic sphere. So, although Yonge was figured as powerful in almost every illustration in *The Barnacle* (she is seen in one to be balancing a globe on the end of her broom stick, see figure 2.j), the persona of Mother Goose nevertheless limited the editor's power to the home. Through this domestic image Yonge feminised her persona, like so many other popular women writers at this time, in order to 'conform to a domestic ideology', but also, I would add, in order to exploit it.[66]

The sensation novelist Ellen Wood, as Deborah Wynne has pointed out, adopted a similar practice of carefully creating a 'housewifely façade' (an image which was perpetuated by her son's biography *Memorials of Mrs Henry Wood* (1894)). Wynne suggests that Wood 'recognised the importance of assuming a frail, lady-like persona as a way of disguising her "unfeminine" traits of literary ambition and business management skills'.[67] Models of literary professionalism that relied on adopting what were perceived to be more masculine writing practices, like Eliot's, were of no use to writers like Yonge and Wood who were writing popular fiction at speed. However, I conclude Chapter Two by exploring Yonge and Eliot's shared concern about the difficulties faced by the female artist-professional in her fiction. In *The Daisy Chain* (1856), *Dynevor Terrace* (1857) and *The Clever Woman of the Family* (1865), Yonge emphasises the usefulness of posing as an amateur for women wishing to covertly enter the professional marketplace, by presenting their work as a

[66] Johnston and Fraser, 'The Professionalization of Women's Writing', p.231.
[67] Deborah Wynne, *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p.66.

hobby, as she herself had learnt to do. Whilst Yonge recognised and encouraged the ambition of young women through her mentoring role in *The Barnacle*, in her fiction she tended, like Eliot, to present a warning to women who do not learn to pose as amateurs, as openly ambitious characters often fail disastrously in their endeavours or become seriously ill.

In the 1870s when sensation fiction was fashionable and anonymity in the press frowned upon, Florence Marryat took up her editorial post with *London Society* (1872-1876). Marryat, like Yonge, had no need for anonymity because the majority of authors writing sensation fiction at this time were women who signed their work, like Mary Braddon and Ellen Wood (also editors of sensational magazines in the 1860s and 70s).[68] However, it is worth noting that Braddon's signature (she signed herself 'M. E. Braddon') served initially to hide her gender and Wood's (signing herself 'Mrs Henry Wood') capitalised on her status as a married woman. Therefore, Yonge and Marryat were unusual in using their full female names. Like Yonge, Marryat practised a signature, publishing fiction under her name since her first novel *Love's Conflict* in 1865. Her name did not appear on the front cover of the monthly numbers of *London Society* as had her predecessor's, Henry Blackburn. But she was, like Yonge in *The Barnacle*, very visible within the pages of her magazine through the illustrations. Indeed, a potential case of slander in 1873 forced Marryat to confirm the open secret of her editorship as she publicly defended her position in *Vanity Fair*.[69]

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[68] Braddon edited *Belgravia* between 1867-1876, Wood edited *The Argosy* between 1867-1887.

[69] The December 1873 number of *London Society* contained a libel in 'one of a series of articles dealing with fashionable society' (The Lists of the Publications of Richard Bentley and Son, 1829-1898, held at the British Library, Mic.F.123/26-30, 1501). The injured party published his complaint in *The Times,* and as a result this number was withdrawn, and a new one issued without the libellous article. *Vanity Fair* accused Marryat of unprofessional conduct during the affair but she published a defence of her practice in that magazine. Her publisher, William Clowes, did not approve of her allowing the article to be published and noted the damaging effect of the resultant debate in *The Times,* expressing his surprise that 'such a clever little woman as our Editress' would allow so scandalous an article to go to print, adding that '[s]uch letters in the *Times* may add to the sale, just in proportion as they take away reputation (William Clowes to Florence Marryat, Publisher's Archives, Bentley and Son 1829-1989,

In the mid-1870s Marryat's long-held interest in spiritualism developed, along with the public debate over the veracity of certain high-profile spirit mediums. Spirit mediums at this time were often young women who worked from home and often did not accept payment for their work (although payments were frequently made *sub rosa* in the form of expensive gifts). Their professional identity was, like that of many female writers, defined by the domestic sphere within which they conducted their work. The medium's persona was built upon posing as an amateur, receiving remuneration for work conducted in the home, presented as something of a hobby and justified by the domestic ideology that figured the home as women's sphere. Although she did not need to mask her identity, Marryat nevertheless found it useful to create a persona, that of a 'spiritualist editress', through *London Society*'s illustrations. In the first part of Chapter Three I examine these illustrations in order to demonstrate that Marryat, like the spirit medium, was presented as firmly rooted within the domestic sphere (she is described in one article, for example, as conducting her editorial work at home). By aligning herself with the figure of the spirit medium through the persona of the 'spiritualist editress' Marryat was, like Yonge's association with Mother Goose, exploiting the notion of domesticity, of paid work as justified because it was conducted within the home. Like Yonge's brand of literary professionalism, Marryat was playfully represented as powerful within the confines of that sphere.

Although Marryat's fiction is radically different from Eliot's and Yonge's, there are some surprising similarities to be drawn for Marryat's novels often present posing as an amateur as the most useful tactic for women new to their profession. Like Eliot's reluctant singers and Yonge's demure writers, Marryat's actresses and literary women do not openly indulge in the enjoyment of public performance but do

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Part 3, The University of California Collection, held at the British Library, Reel 1, Mic.B.53/211, 9 December 1873). For Marryat's statement on the time affair, see *Vanity Fair*, vol. 10 (27 December 1873), p.216.

take pride in their work, and the economic independence it affords them. Rather unexpectedly, perhaps, Marryat's artist-professionals resemble Eliot's and Yonge's for they regard their art as a vocation that demands hard work and moral integrity (a crucial element of Eliot's argument in 'Silly Novels'). More than that of Eliot and Yonge, however, Marryat's fiction shows the woman artist at work and relying on the pay she receives. So, despite writing very different types of novel, what emerges from the fiction of all three author-editors is an idealised combination of posing as an amateur and skilful performance as an artist. The fictional representations that these women offered went some way to resolve the dilemma that was being discussed in the 'Dignity of Literature' debate. Furthermore, Eliot, Yonge and Marryat represented marriage as impacting on women's careers in different ways, but my analysis reveals that these writers, like many after the 1850s, 'still sketch in the working life as something vague and temporary, to be set aside when life improves, and a lover appears on the scene'.[70] By reading the personas of Mother Goose and the spiritualist editress as linked usefully to the notion of domesticity and amateurism for Yonge and Marryat, we may begin to understand why so many popular women writers in the nineteenth century chose not to follow Eliot's practice of anonymity and (later in her career) adoption of a male pseudonym. Eliot's ideal of professionalism, however, only serves to highlight that she was an exception; she was one of the few women writers who held a place in the high culture tradition and she fought hard to distance herself from those women whom she dismissed as 'popular', those who wrote for 'novel readers', rather than for 'people of high culture'.[71] For popular authors like Yonge and

[70] Valerie Sanders, *Eve's Renegades: Victorian Anti-Feminist Women Novelists* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p.58.
[71] Gordon S. Haight, (ed.), *The Letters of George Eliot in Nine Volumes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959-1978), vol. III, p.302. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text. See Deborah Wynne, 'George Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Dinah Mulock Craik's *A Brave Lady*', *Notes &*

Marryat (and Eliot's 'Silly Novels' indicates that most women writers at this time were dismissed as 'popular'), embracing professionalism in Eliot's way was not a viable strategy for dealing with the changing literary marketplace. In the next section I provide an overview of recent critical work on the Victorian periodical press and on women writers' roles as editors and contributors. This will contextualise my own examination of the working conditions for women editors during the mid-Victorian period. I will go on to analyse the specific challenges and opportunities that these women faced as they edited and wrote fiction.

**The Periodical Press: 1850-1880**

Although my purpose is to examine the professional identities of three female author-editors, my methodological framework has been significantly informed by research that does not focus on women alone. Wynne's *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine* (2001), for example, offers case studies of novels written by men and women. Reading the magazine itself as a complete text through which the serialised novel can be explored in new and fruitful ways, Wynne provides an enlightening examination of, amongst others, *Great Expectations* (1860-1861) as serialised in Charles Dickens's *All the Year Round*. Arguing that this magazine 'inhabited the borderland between "highbrow" literature culture [and] the popular literature enjoyed by readers of "lowbrow" weekly penny magazines', Wynne shows how, in his role of 'novelist as editor', Dickens arranged his magazine with an eye to middle-class readers who had an appetite for such a hybrid production.[72] Because Dickens was both editor and contributor, the magazine was 'subject to [his] powerful editorial control', and his policy of anonymity encouraged the assumption that all

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*Queries*, vol. 51, no. 2 (2004), pp.160–162 for more on Eliot's feelings on being compared to 'popular' novelists.

[72] Wynne, *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine*, pp.22-23.

contributions were 'Charles Dickens's Own'.[73] This meant that when serialising his own fiction in particular, Dickens was able to 'support his serial, and his choice of accompanying texts [in order to highlight] those themes in the novel which he particularly wanted to emphasize'.[74] So published alongside *Great Expectations*, for example, were articles exploring 'common fears surrounding biological degeneracy', highlighting Pip's own 'obsession with origin'.[75] This is similar to the editorial strategy that Florence Marryat adopted when serialising her spiritualist novel *Open! Sesame!* in *London Society*, for the articles published alongside this novel raised questions about the veracity of spirit mediums, whilst emphasising the subtly pro-spiritualist position of Marryat's novel as the lead serial. Though *London Society* was not aimed at the same market as *All the Year Round*, it is nevertheless useful to note that Marryat's editorial strategy was similar to Dickens's, despite the very different magazines they conducted.

Like Wynne, Laurel Brake argues that the periodical can be fruitfully read as a complete text, rather than being picked apart for its fiction and articles. In *Subjugated Knowledges* (1994) Brake sets out to map 'the relations between literature and journalism and their respective formations to studies of individual authorship and publishing history'.[76] As this statement implies, Brake's focus is historical and textual, consciously rejecting the author, genre or theme structures adopted in other studies.[77] Of relevance to my own research is Brake's argument that the periodical press is an inherently 'gendered space'.[78] For example, in a notable chapter on Oscar

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[73] 'Charles Dickens's Own' was a title that Dickens considered when he was planning the magazine. See Wynne, *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine*, p.25.
[74] Wynne, *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine*, p.84.
[75] Wynne, *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine*, p.84.
[76] Laurel Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges: Journalism, Gender and Literature in the Nineteenth-Century* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p.xiv.
[77] Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges*, p.xi.
[78] Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges*, p.126.

Wilde's editorship of *The Woman's World* (1887-1889), Brake suggests that Wilde's 'editorial project' involved 'not only the construction of the cultivated New Woman but the introduction of male homosexual discourse into female space'.[79] Just as Dickens chose his accompanying texts carefully, so Wilde moved, removed and included articles in order to support his project of a 'male homosexual sub-text [that] was private, available only to those who could read the discourse'.[80]

Wilde's short period of editorship demonstrates how covert editorial strategies could permanently change and shape the house style of a magazine, and this is a tactic that is significant to Florence Marryat's editorial career, for *London Society* came to be defined as a sensational magazine which engaged closely with the debate over spiritualism due to her own strategy of foregrounding mediumship. Equally, the *Westminster Review* under George Eliot retained its reputation as a quality quarterly offering challenging and thought-provoking articles not seen since the editorship of J.S. Mill. Although Marryat's 'project' of spiritualism, and Eliot's 'project' of highbrow journalism were not as covert as Wilde's 'project' of a 'male homosexual subtext', they were achieved nevertheless through similar strategies, such as the positioning of articles.

In her second book on Victorian print media, *Print in Transition* (2001), Brake continues to read the magazine as a text in its own right, arguing that even material such as 'advertisements and wrappers', if available, should be included for study.[81] Brake's research into gender is particularly useful for my purposes for she examines the relationship between gender and 'higher journalism' in the *Westminster Review* at mid-century, highlighting the fact that Victorian notions of gender not only encompassed discussions of 'the woman question' but also issues pertaining to

[79] Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges*, p.127.
[80] Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges*, p.134.
[81] Laurel Brake, *Print in Transition, 1850-1910* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2001), p.xiii.

masculinity and, more covertly, homosexuality. For Brake, gender is ever-present in the *Westminster Review* through the choice of contributors, subjects addressed and covert gender politics, and this is an argument I develop in Chapter One as I examine George Eliot's contributions to the periodical during the 1850s.[82] Brake's assessment of Eliot's 'Woman in France' and 'Silly Novels' is invaluable for contextualising these articles as 'part of a nuanced and extensive discourse involving gender which permeates the culture and politics of the 1850s and 1860s'.[83] Whereas Brake's interest is in how these articles formed a part of the gendered discourse of the *Westminster Review* in the 1850s, my discussion in Chapter One focuses on how Eliot was carefully positioning herself through these articles as a female professional in a male-dominated publication, demonstrating how the *Westminster Review*'s pervasive gendered discourse enabled one woman at the beginning of her career to develop a distinctive professional identity, aided by the practice of anonymity.

Similarly, in *Encounters in the Victorian Press* (2005) Laurel Brake and Julie Codell examine 'encounters' between the reader, editor and author within the magazine itself. In Johanna Smith's chapter on *Eliza Cook's Journal* (1849-1854), the specific encounter under consideration involves class, gender and sexuality, and how the nature of this 'encounter' raises more questions than answers about the implied audience and genre of this magazine. Smith seeks to open up the 'possibility of a lesbian readership and a lesbian narrative space in the *Journal's* fiction' and, in keeping with the collection's interest in encounters between individuals, rather than in the individuals themselves, does not consider Cook's editorial strategies in depth.[84] Nevertheless, Smith's chapter provides useful context for my own research because

[82] Brake, *Print in Transition,* p.88.
[83] Brake, *Print in Transition,* p.88.
[84] Johanna M. Smith, 'Textual Encounters in *Eliza Cook's Journal*: Class, Gender, and Sexuality', in Laurel Brake and Julie F. Codell (eds), *Encounters in the Victorian Press: Editors, Authors, Readers* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2005), p.62.

she uncovers the career of one early woman editor, although the magazine Cook edited was very different from those that I discuss here. Her research demonstrates that although the woman editor was unusual in her position, Eliot, Yonge and Marryat were by no means unique.

Sheila Rosenberg's analysis of the *Westminster Review* between 1885 and 1891 is also of interest here because she expands Brake's argument on the pervasiveness of this magazine's gendered discourse. By examining Mona Caird's articles 'Marriage' and 'Ideal Marriage' (1888) within their original publishing contexts, Rosenberg demonstrates that these articles formed just part of a 'wider circle that formulated and promoted the debate' around marriage and divorce in the 1880s.[85] This 'wider circle' was comprised of the other women contributing to the *Westminster Review* at the same time as Caird, including Eleanor Marx who published 'The Woman Question from a Socialist Point of View' before Caird's articles in 1886 and Elizabeth Rachel Chapman who published 'Marriage Rejection and Marriage Reform' just after Caird's articles in September 1888. Although not directly relevant to George Eliot's time with the magazine during the 1850s, Rosenberg's research nevertheless helpfully illustrates the importance of contextualising influential articles within the original periodical publication and the legacy of the *Westminster Review*'s engagement with gender debate in the 1850s, of which Eliot formed a crucial part.

Unlike the text- or genre-centred studies that I have discussed so far, Mark Turner's *Trollope and the Magazines* (2000) provides an example of author-centred research which usefully explores one author's neglected relationship with the periodical press. Turner examines Trollope's fiction in a number of journals (including the *Cornhill, Saint Paul's, Good Words* and the *Fortnightly Review*) in

[85] Sheila Rosenberg, 'Encounters in the *Westminster Review:* Dialogues on Marriage and Divorce', in Brake and Codell (eds), *Encounters in the Victorian Press*, p.134.

order to trace his response to the different demands and house styles of various family magazines. What is helpful about Turner's approach to the periodical press for my purposes is that his interest lies specifically in gender: how magazines themselves were gendered (Turner reads the dominant tone of the *Fortnightly Review* as masculine and the *Cornhill* as feminine) and how Trollope adapted his fiction to suit the dominant gendered discourse of each magazine.

That Trollope was able to adapt his writing in this way implies that Victorian notions of gender were pliable and performative, rather than essentialist and fixed, suggesting that writers like Trollope and George Eliot were able to exploit fruitfully this pliability, in Eliot's case by retaining her pseudonym in the 1860s even though she was known to be a woman. Turner provides an interesting reading of Trollope's editorship of *Saint Paul's* (1867–1870), arguing that he used his position as author-editor to lend a homoerotic charge to the predominantly masculine tone of the magazine. Although this homoerotic subtext is not directly relevant to the editors considered here, and whilst some critics consider Turner's reading as controversial, *Trollope and the Magazines* is useful, like Brake's analysis of Wilde's *Woman's World*, for demonstrating the radical effect that a covert editorial strategy can have on a magazine's house style.[86]

The studies I have mentioned so far all consider the role of the editor as just one part of their remit. Joel Wiener's collection *Innovators and Preachers* (1985) is the only study to focus exclusively on the editor in Britain. Robert A. Colby explores the function of the 'novelist as editor' with an aim to shedding 'light on their

[86] For example, in her review of Turner's book, Judith Knelman argues that 'Turner's depiction of Trollope as a crude and vulgar raconteur to [the *Saint Paul's*] audience […] goes too far', in *Victorian Studies* (Autumn 2001), pp.113-114.

objectives and the reasons for their success or failures'. [87] Colby offers case studies of Anthony Trollope, William Makepeace Thackeray, William Ainsworth and Charles Lever, arguing that their careers are 'representative' of the author-editor from the early- to mid-century.[88] Yet women editors are conspicuously absent from Colby's research, though he does acknowledge female author-editors as 'singular anomalies', mentioning Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, 'the churchy Charlotte Yonge', M. E. Braddon, Ellen Wood and Florence Marryat.[89] Colby's chapter is helpful for providing an overview of the careers of four male author-editors; however, the exclusion of women and lack of engagement with issues of gender means that his research is not 'representative' of the author-editor at mid-century and, as such, is limited in its usefulness for my purposes. Colby's research serves to highlight how neglected the field of Victorian women's journalism was before the new wave of scholarship in the 1990s, inspired by the groundbreaking feminist work of the 1970s. This I discuss in the next section, in which I provide an overview of research into women's journalism at mid-century.

**Women Writers and the Press: 1850-1880**

The framework of my thesis is informed by Elaine Showalter's definition of the female literary tradition in *A Literature of Their Own* (1977), in which she identified three distinct phases of women's engagement with the literary culture: the feminine (1840–1880), feminist (1880–1920) and female (1920–the present).[90] Showalter argued that during the feminine phase there were three distinct generations of novelists. The first generation (born between 1800 and 1820) belonged to the

[87] Joel H. Wiener, 'Introduction', in Joel H. Wiener (ed.), *Innovators and Preachers: The Role of the Editor in Victorian England* (Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1985), p.xv.
[88] Robert A. Colby, 'Goose Quill and Blue Pencil: The Victorian Novelist as Editor', in Wiener (ed.), *Innovators and Preachers*, p.204.
[89] Colby, 'Goose Quill and Blue Pencil', p.204.
[90] Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of their Own: from Charlotte Brontë to Doris Lessing* (London: Virago, 2003), p.13.

'Golden Age of Victorian authoresses' and included the Brontës, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot.[91] The second generation (born between 1820 and 1840) followed 'in the footsteps of the great' and included Charlotte Yonge, Eliza Lynn Linton and Margaret Oliphant.[92] And finally, the third generation (born between 1840 and 1860), started their careers at an earlier age than their predecessors and were more comfortable with their professional status. These women included sensation novelists such as Florence Marryat and Mary Elizabeth Braddon.

I examine a novelist from each generation that Showalter identified in order to compare their developing professional identities. By choosing a writer from each generation in this way, it is possible to see how the practice of the female author-editor shifted over time, from the anonymity and pseudonymity of George Eliot to the professional confidence of Florence Marryat. Within Showalter's definition of the feminine phase, I have focused my research on the 1850s, 1860s, 1870s and 1880s, the decades identified as a 'golden age of women's journalism'.[93] There were also many changes to the literary market at this time: changes in legislation, such as the repeal of the stamp duty in 1855 and of paper duty in 1861, which led to an influx of periodicals onto the market.[94] However, although the final text I examine in this thesis was published in 1892, I have generally not extended my research of the periodical press into the 1880s and 1890s because my focus is women's journalism at mid-century, rather than the New Journalism of the 1880s and 1890s. Recognising that women's careers cannot be neatly divided into decades, I briefly address the question of the female artist-professional in New Woman fiction as part of my Conclusion.

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[91] Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own,* p.19.
[92] Showlater, *A Literature of Their Own,* p.19.
[93] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous,* p.5.
[94] Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800–1900* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p.357.

Writing in 1977, Showalter argued that a large number of popular female authors, like Yonge and Marryat, had been neglected due to the sustained interest in more familiar canonical figures, like George Eliot. As June Sturrock notes, 'Yonge is rarely considered in the company of the "canonical" women writers such as Eliot […] but demonstrably she was seriously concerned with many of the same issues'.[95] Showalter sought not only to recover forgotten women writers, but also to examine canonical authors like Eliot alongside those neglected by critics, something that I also attempt to achieve here. Yet as Thompson has suggested, despite the project of recovery begun in the 1970s by Showalter and others, non-canonical writers are still neglected by critics who continue to focus on 'the elite few'.[96] In her edited collection, *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question* (1999), Thompson aimed to redefine the canon in order to encompass many of the writers who have either dropped out of it or, like Florence Marryat, were never in it in the first place (indeed, Andrew Maunder's 'Introduction' to *Love's Conflict* is currently the only publication that offers a comprehensive overview of Marryat's career in any detail[97]). Sturrock's chapter in Thompson's collection contextualises Charlotte Yonge's representation of the literary woman within the debate over women's work of the 1850s, and in Chapter Three I engage with her argument that Charlotte Yonge 'responds predictably to the changing concept of the literary woman […] with a reaffirmation of traditional duties and hierarchies'.[98] If we read Yonge's fiction within the context of women writers posing as amateurs, then her response to the changing climate cannot easily be dismissed as predictably anti-feminist, as Sturrock's

[95] Sturrock, 'Literary Women of the 1850s', p.117.
[96] Nicola Diane Thompson, 'Introduction', in Thompson (ed), *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question*, p.2.
[97] Andrew Maunder, 'Introduction', in Andrew Maunder (ed.), *Domestic Sensationalism, Florence Marryat, Love's Conflict,* vol. 2, *Varieties of Women's Sensation Fiction, 1855–1890* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2004), p.xix.
[98] Sturrock, 'Literary Women of the 1850s', p.122.

argument suggests. Indeed, read within this context, Yonge's representation of the literary woman is revealed to be less a reaffirmation of women's traditional duties than it is an indication of how the domestic ideology could be usefully employed by women wishing to enter the literary profession. As a successful author whose principles were conservative, Yonge's engagement with women's professionalism was highly complex and anything but 'predictable'.

Like Thompson's collection, Joanne Shattock's *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900* (2001) offers insightful analysis of the careers of a variety of women novelists and journalists, though the focus is not specifically women's journalism. Elisabeth Jay's chapter on women writers and religion is relevant to my own research into Charlotte Yonge's career for she argues that '[r]eligion offered alternative networks to women who were excluded from the clubland where male authors and editors made their contacts'.[99] The success of Yonge's career relied heavily on such alternative networks, because although she turned to her father and her mentor the Reverend John Keble for literary advice, it was in fact the female network of friends and family which led to her assuming her editorial role, and in turn through which she herself helped other young women starting out in their careers. Lynne Vallone's chapter in this collection on children's literature identifies the publication of *The Daisy Chain,* which I examine in Chapter Two, as an 'important milestone in children's literature', supporting my suggestion that by the 1860s Yonge was a recognised and respected author of juvenile and adult fiction with a name that she could usefully employ through the practice of signature.[100]

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[99] Elisabeth Jay, 'Women Writers and Religion: "A Self Worth Saving, a Duty Worth Doing and a Voice Worth Raising,"' in Shattock (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain*, p.260.
[100] Lynne Vallone, 'Women Writing for Children', in Shattock (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain*, p.282.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar built on Showalter's pioneering research in the hugely influential *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), in which they argued that because Western cultural 'definitions of literary authority are […] both overtly and covertly patriarchal' the Victorian woman writer struggled for 'artistic self-definition'.[101] As such, the only figures of female authority available to the Victorian woman writer were 'those mythic masks male artists have fastened over her human face'.[102] The angel, fairy, sprite, virgin, monster, witch, hag, and madwoman: for Gilbert and Gubar, these are the 'male-engendered female figures' that Western culture has bestowed upon the woman writer.[103] What is of significance for my purposes is their argument that literary women like George Eliot, the Brontë sisters and Elizabeth Barrett Browning faced 'equally degrading options when [they] had to define [their] public presence in the world',[104] leading to their famous re-evaluation of Harold Bloom's concept of the 'anxiety of influence' as the 'anxiety of authorship'.[105]

For Gilbert and Gubar, publishing anonymously was 'a form of self-repression that women imposed on themselves in order to participate in an overwhelmingly masculine literary culture'.[106] Within this oppressive literary culture, the necessary act of 'concealment', of adopting a 'mythic mask' was 'a strategy born of fear and dis-ease'.[107] However, recent criticism has begun to challenge Gilbert and Gubar's reading of Victorian women's anonymity. This is not to suggest that some women, particularly those writing highbrow fiction, did not value the protection that a pseudonym afforded them: the research of Gaye Tuchman and Nina Fortin in *Edging*

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[101] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp.45-46 and p.50.
[102] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p.12.
[103] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p.17.
[104] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p.64.
[105] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p.49.
[106] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous,* p.6.
[107] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p.74.

*Women Out* (1989), and Elsie Michie in *Outside the Pale* (1993) in particular demonstrates the often crippling obstacles that female authors faced at mid-century as the high culture novel came to be valued as a masculine genre, and the popular novel dismissed as feminine.

Describing what they call the 'empty field phenomenon', Tuchman and Fortin argued that men began to view 'the occupation of novelist as ripe for invasion' because they saw women writers as 'insignificant' in terms of competition.[108] The word 'invasion', of course, implies that the field was not empty, as male authors had supposed, and indeed Tuchman and Fortin's research demonstrates that '[b]efore 1840 […] most English novelists were women'.[109] *Edging Women Out* describes the process whereby women slowly became excluded from the literary marketplace as the novel came to be valued as a highbrow form and therefore increasingly male-dominated. During this 'period of [male] invasion' (1840–1879), whilst the majority of novelists were women, the novel itself began to be valued by men as a form of 'great literature'.[110] Between 1880 and 1899 (the period of redefinition) the realist novel had not only come to be regarded as culturally valuable, but also gendered as 'manly' and therefore read as 'great literature'.[111] The final stage of exclusion (1901–1917) Tuchman and Fortin define as the period of institutionalization during which male domination of the high culture novel was complete.

Eliot, Yonge and Marryat were all writing in the 'period of invasion' during which women writers were increasingly visible, with the publication of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* and Elizabeth Gaskell's *The Life of Charlotte*

[108] Tuchman and Fortin, *Edging Women Out*, p.5 and p.7.
[109] Tuchman and Fortin, *Edging Women Out,* p.1.
[110] Tuchman and Fortin, *Edging Women Out,* p.1.
[111] Tuchman and Fortin, *Edging Women Out,* p.8.

*Brontë* both being published in 1857.[112] As we have already seen, Eliot was writing for the highbrow market, so that even she (Tuchman and Fortin argue) suffered from the 'critical double standard' when her identity was revealed in 1859.[113] However, in Chapter One I complicate Tuchman and Fortin's reading of the response to Eliot's gender by suggesting that rather than simply subjecting her to the 'critical double standard' that was applied to other women writers (though Eliot did certainly experience this), critics more often did not know what to make of her, or how to write about her, once her gender had been revealed. Critical response to Eliot's complicated public persona was more ambiguous than Tuchman and Fortin imply. Indeed, Lyn Pykett argues that although there is 'a certain dramatic appeal' to Tuchman and Fortin's argument, their book presents 'a radical over-simplifiction' of gender and the marketplace.[114]

Like Gilbert and Gubar, Michie argues that female authors were 'imprisoned within a limited definition of femininity' and, like Tuchman and Fortin, suggests that as a consequence they became culturally excluded, 'relegated' to the realm of popular culture.[115] Michie's interest (like mine) is in how women writers negotiated their position within this limited discourse, and how this discourse was linked to the concept of high culture. Michie draws our attention to the mid-Victorian 'fear that civilization might collapse into fragments'[116] in order to argue that the fragmented opposite of culture was gendered as feminine, that femininity was constructed as 'broken and incapacitated' and women were 'conceived to be incapable of

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[112] Elsie B. Michie, *Outside the Pale: Cultural Exclusion, Gender Difference, and the Victorian Woman Writer* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), p.2.
[113] Tuchman and Fortin are using Showalter's term here, *Edging Women Out,* pp.185-186.
[114] Pykett, *The Improper Feminine*, p.36.
[115] Michie, *Outside the Pale,* p.4.
[116] Michie, *Outside the Pale,* p.142.

participating in the ideal of "high" culture'.[117] In her discussion of Eliot's *Middlemarch,* Michie points out the particular dilemma that Eliot faced as a woman ambitious to write high culture fiction:

> if Eliot endorsed the Arnoldian ideal of cultural wholeness, she was effectively supporting a sphere of knowledge which was implicitly defined as masculine and from which women were excluded because of their gender. […] If, on the other hand, Eliot chose to resist the idea of masculine wholeness, she was implicitly placing herself on the side opposed to culture, the position of anarchy or rebellion.[118]

But Michie argues that Eliot resisted 'that model of gendered difference' which relied upon 'the traditional Victorian opposition between masculine wholeness and feminine fragmentation' in the chapters set in Rome of *Middlemarch*.[119] Having mistakenly figured Casaubon as an ideal teacher, Dorothea experiences Rome for herself and experiences it as a 'place of stupendous fragmentariness'.[120] For Michie, it is in these scenes that:

> Eliot dramatizes the moment when a female figure looks at a male and ceases to see him as the embodiment of cultural wholeness. In that moment, Dorothea is shown recognizing that the masculine perspective does not guarantee whole, full, or coherent vision.[121]

Eliot 'evokes the various political positions which could be articulated through the opposition between masculine wholeness and feminine fragmentation and, at the same time, refuses to reify that opposition'; in doing so, she 'exposes the apparently essentialist or biological model of gender difference as a discursive structure', rather than a natural order which the Arnoldian concept of culture implied.[122] Michie reads Eliot as making a 'gesture of resistance' to this concept of masculine wholeness by

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[117] Michie, *Outside the Pale,* p.145.
[118] Michie, *Outside the Pale,* pp.17-18.
[119] Michie, *Outside the Pale,* p.17.
[120] Michie, *Outside the Pale,* p.158.
[121] Michie, *Outside the Pale,* p.159.
[122] Michie, *Outside the Pale,* pp.17-18.

depicting 'culture itself not as a seamless whole but as a heterogeneous construct made up of myriad pieces'.[123]

However, unlike Eliot, Dorothea does not gain access to culture through professional work. Although *Middlemarch* is not a novel I consider in detail, Michie's argument is nevertheless useful because she highlights Eliot's subversion of, as well as conformity to, notions of high culture through her fiction. Ultimately, however, I would emphasise that Dorothea remains frustrated, as do many of Eliot's heroines, excluded as she is from a sphere that she struggles to comprehend. As Gilbert and Gubar contend, this is suggestive of Eliot's internalisation of patriarchal literary standards.[124] Linda Lewis provides a similar analysis in *Germaine de Staël, George Sand and the Victorian Woman Artist* (2003), but unlike Michie, focuses instead upon Eliot's female artists. Lewis concludes that Eliot's frustrated artists are indicative of her 'Erinna complex – the fear of female silencing',[125] and, as such, emphasise this frustration and fear. My contention, however, is that whilst Eliot's female artists *are* silenced, they are also shown to adopt the tactic of posing as an amateur in order to practise their vocation, though ultimately they often give that vocation up when married, as the meek Caterina Sarti does in *Scenes of Clerical Life,* and later as Mirah Lapidoth does in *Daniel Deronda.*

Judith Johnston and Hilary Fraser's exploration of the professionalisation of women's writing, first published in Shattock's *Women and Literature in Britain*, is of particular significance to my research. They identify George Eliot's 'Silly Novels' as a key article published at a crucial moment in women's struggle to be recognised as professionals within the field of literature. For Fraser and Johnston, Eliot's essay is a 'call to arms', as well as a 'plea' for women not to 'prostitute their gifts' or to present

[123] Michie, *Outside the Pale,* p.163.
[124]Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p.466.
[125] Lewis, *Germaine de Staël, George Sand and the Victorian Woman Artist*, p.11.

themselves as 'amateurs'.[126] Feminist critics continue to disagree over Eliot's intentions in her essay; however, what is important for my purposes is that Fraser and Johnston not only locate 'Silly Novels' as central within the debate over women's literary professionalism, but also highlight that to present oneself as an amateur was a practice employed by women who had been writing professionally 'in an attempt to negotiate gendered discursive boundaries, and often disclaiming professional credentials, qualifications and sometimes even competence in order to construct themselves as writing within a domestic discourse and conforming to a domestic ideology'.[127] While the practice of posing as an amateur was one employed by many women who wrote popular fiction, this practice has not been typically discussed alongside the use of pseudonyms, anonymity and signature, as I do here. Fraser and Johnston's opening paragraphs hint at how useful this strategy was for many female authors, and my research builds on their work by highlighting the importance of this practice to the careers of Charlotte Yonge and Florence Marryat, as compared to a canonical figure like George Eliot who chose pseudonymity.

Many of the studies on women's journalism that I have discussed so far engage with women's positioning of themselves within the professionalism debate through the medium of the periodical press. My interest is specifically in the professional identity of women who edited different kinds of magazines and Margaret Beetham's *A Magazine of Her Own?* (1996) demonstrates how the woman's magazine developed at mid-century, a development which coincides with the editorial careers of Eliot, Yonge and Marryat. The feminist press, which I mention in my Conclusion, had its roots in women's magazines such as the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* (1852-1879) and the *Englishwoman's Journal* (1858-1864) which

[126] Johnston and Fraser, 'The Professionalization of Women's Writing', p.231.
[127] Johnston and Fraser, 'The Professionalization of Women's Writing', p.231.

emerged during the period that Eliot and Yonge were working as editors.[128] Beetham considers the construction of female professional identity in this magazine through the career of Matilda Browne. Browne replaced Isabella Beeton in 1865 and adopted the persona of 'Silkworm' in her column 'Spinnings'. Whilst the house style of the magazine itself was still defined by the editor (Sam Beeton) and the masculine tone of his letters column, Browne nevertheless 'developed a persona which was manifestly feminine and quite distinct from that of the editor'.[129] Examined within this context, it is clear that Browne's strategy was not to conceal her gender as a writer, but instead to make it 'central to her persona', and in this her practice mirrors that of both Yonge and Marryat who also femininised their professional personas through the identities of Mother Goose and the spiritualist editress.[130] Indeed, when *The Barnacle* ceased circulation in the mid-1860s Yonge adopted a very similar persona to Browne, that of 'Arachne and her spiders', in *The Monthly Packet*. Browne's practice of adopting a feminine persona during the 1870s is significant because it suggests that Yonge and Marryat's similar practice was typical of women journalists, despite their unusual position as author-editors. Clearly for Browne, Yonge and Marryat, a feminised persona was particularly useful.

Like *A Magazine of Her Own?*, Barbara Onslow's *Women of the Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (2000) offers an important contribution to our understanding of the role that the periodical press played in the careers of many women writers in the nineteenth century. Onslow's book combines the study of journalism and fiction, genres which Victorian women themselves so often combined

[128] For a comprehensive overview of women's magazines, see Margaret Beetham and Kay Boardman (eds), *Victorian Women's Magazines: An Anthology* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2001).
[129] Margaret Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own? Domesticity and Desire in the Woman's Magazine, 1800–1914* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p.79.
[130] Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own?*, p.80.

but which modern scholars tend to separate into the fields of 'print media' and 'literature'. The sheer scope of Onslow's research indicates the broad range of women's roles within the periodical press throughout the century, from journalist, to reviewer, critic, and editor. She addresses the huge variety of periodicals for which women wrote, from highbrow publications, to the sensational, to the provincial and specialist children's or religious magazines. In discussing the boundaries of her own research, Onslow acknowledges Florence Marryat as one of the authors who 'deserve attention [that she] cannot give'.[131] For Onslow, journalism allowed women like Marryat to slip in and out of the profession, to use it as an apprenticeship for a career of novel writing or as a means of gaining a living in its own right.[132] The appeal of this flexibility is evident in the careers of the editors considered here: Eliot was able to critique the fiction of others before attempting it herself, Yonge was able to guide the careers of young women whilst continuing her own successful career, and Marryat was able to build her public profile whilst making contacts for her subsequent career on stage. Significantly for my purposes, Onslow identifies specific practices that women adopted in order to survive in the world of the male-dominated periodical press and the two key practices that she highlights are domesticating the professional nature of journalism (like Yonge and Marryat), and employing a male pseudonym (like Eliot). Both practices, for Onslow, were born out of necessity within the context of the changing marketplace.[133]

Onslow dedicates a chapter to the woman editor, and argues that (as was certainly the case for the women considered here) achieving the position of editor often depended upon family connections and, to a lesser extent, success as a novelist

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[131] Barbara Onslow, *Women of the Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p.6.
[132] Onslow, *Women of the Press,* p.18.
[133] Onslow, *Women of the Press,* pp.18-21.

(as was the case for Charlotte Riddell who edited *St. James's Magazine* (1867) for a short time after the success of *George Geith* (1864)).[134] Whilst providing a useful history of the woman editor, Onslow also introduces the importance of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's editorial career, which is of significance here because, as I mentioned earlier, Braddon edited the sensation magazine *Belgravia* which competed with Marryat's *London Society.* Furthermore, Braddon and Marryat had professional links: both were sensation novelists who took up editorial posts around the same time (Braddon in 1866, Marryat in 1872) and both used their magazines to showcase their own fiction.[135] Although Braddon's *Belgravia* did compete with *London Society* as well as with the other popular metropolitan monthlies that had sprung up in the 1860s (namely, *St. James's Magazine, Temple Bar* and *Bow Bells*), Marryat had contributed to Braddon's magazine before going on to assume an editorial post of her own.[136] Indeed, future research might fruitfully compare Braddon's career trajectory to Marryat's, a comparison which space does not allow for here.

Whilst Onslow dedicates one chapter to the British woman editor, Sharon M. Harris's collection *Blue Pencils and Hidden Hands* (2004) focuses exclusively on the American woman editor. Harris identifies what she calls 'three types of editorial practices': the apprentice, the woman who uses her time as editor as a stepping stone

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[134] Charlotte Mitchell's entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* on Charlotte Riddell does not indicate when Riddell gave up editorship of *St James's Magazine.* See Charlotte Mitchell, 'Riddell, Charlotte Eliza Lawson (1832–1906)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35748, accessed 27 July 2009].

[135] In an interesting reversal of Florence Marryat's career, Braddon first worked on the stage before turning to literature. See Marlene Tromp, Pamela K. Gilbert and Aeron Haynie, *Beyond Sensation: Mary Elizabeth Braddon in Context* (Albany: University of New York Press, 2000) for more on Braddon's theatrical career.

[136] Marryat published her sensational short stories 'In the Heart of the Ardenness' (October 1869), 'Captain Norton's Diary' (May 1870) and 'An Utter Impossibility' (September 1871) in Braddon's *Belgravia.* Her children Ethel, Augusta and Cecil Norton Marryat all published short stories in *Belgravia* in the 1890s, perhaps benefiting from their mother's previous experience with the magazine.

to another career, and the woman for whom editing is her main career.[137] In examining the experience of the apprentice, Lucille M. Schultz explains how *The Jabberwock*, founded in 1888 as the magazine of the Boston Girls' Latin School, provided 'a hands-on training ground as well as first publication venue for those girls who would have careers as writers or editors'. [138] The school magazine thus became a useful vehicle for learning the mechanics of the publishing trade, from the demands of writing serially to negotiation with contributors. Many (though not all) who worked on *The Jabberwock* went on to have successful careers in the publishing industry, such as Mabel Hay Barrows Mussey who became associate editor for *The Nation* (1919-1920). As an example of a 'training' ground, *The Jabberwock* mirrors Yonge's *The Barnacle* magazine, for this journal was also privately circulated and offered budding female journalists a space in which to practise their trade. It seems that for some, mentoring through private magazines formed an important part of many women's careers.

Jennifer Blanchard offers a fascinating example of Harris's second type of woman editor, the woman who used her position to start another career. Blanchard explores the career of Ann Stephens, who founded and edited the *Portland Magazine* (1834-1836) as well as *Mrs. Stephens' New Monthly* (1856-1858). Stephens's aim, particularly in her early career, was to establish her own 'cultural authority' through her magazine.[139] This 'cultural authority', Blanchard suggests, was 'enacted in her stories, poems, and editorial notes', as well as less subtle means by which her 'works [were] littered with dropped names and casual […] references to her own

[137] Sharon M. Harris, 'Introduction', in Sharon M. Harris (ed.), *Blue Pencils and Hidden Hands: Women Editing Periodicals, 1830–1910* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004), p.xxxvi.
[138] Lucille M. Schultz, 'Editing *The Jabberwock*: A Formative Experience for Nineteenth-Century Girls', in Harris (ed.), *Blue Pencils and Hidden Hands*, p.10.
[139] Jennifer Blanchard, '"Her Object Is Good": Ann S. Stephens and *Portland Magazine*', in Harris (ed.), *Blue Pencils and Hidden Hands*, p.42.

importance'.[140] Having established this authority, Stephens then built upon the reputation she founded as an editor in order to pursue a successful career in journalism and fiction writing, and although she is now a rather obscure figure, she then entertained such literary greats as Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray and Edgar Allan Poe. Of the three author-editors considered here, only Eliot's experience might be comparable to that of Stephens's aim of developing her own cultural authority through a magazine; however, because she was the anonymous editor of, and later contributor to, the *Westminster Review*, Eliot's cultural authority only really developed once she started to publish fiction under a pseudonym.

In an examination of what Harris terms the 'career editor', Paula Bernat Bennett considers Mary Louise Booth's work for *Harper's Bazaar* (1867-1889). Bennett argues that Booth 'recognized the potential in the high fashion magazine's generic position as trend-setter […] and exploited it from the start, using it as a cover for her advocacy of social and, in particular, gender reform'.[141] The career editor stayed in her position in order to enact some sort of reform, and in this way was different from editors like Charlotte Yonge who might be read as a career editor because she stayed in her role for the majority of her career but did not exhibit the overt political engagement of Booth. Harris's collection is important because it demonstrates the variety of editorial styles of different American women, as well as highlighting that although the work of recovering women novelists has continued since the 1970s, the recovery of women editors remains largely neglected. My thesis attempts to address this gap through an examination of British women who adopted the hybrid role of the author-editor.

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[140] Blanchard, '"Her Object Is Good"', p.42.
[141] Paula Bernat Bennett, 'Subtle Subversion: Mary Louise Booth and *Harper's Bazaar*', in Harris (ed.), *Blue Pencils and Hidden Hands*, p.226.

Finally, there are two other significant books which have particularly informed my approach. Both of these studies focus on women's journalism and also theorise notions of gender to a greater extent than the studies discussed so far. In *Gender and the Victorian Periodical* (2003), Hilary Fraser, Judith Johnston and Stephanie Green interrogate the construction of gender through Victorian print media. The aim of their book is to 'address the role played by the periodical press in the formulation and circulation of gender ideologies in Victorian Britain', and of particular relevance to my research is their interest in 'the contribution of women […] as editors, proprietors, writers and readers of periodical journalism', to the dissemination of 'gender ideologies'.[142] They contend that periodicals played a significant role in representing *and* mediating definitions of gender difference. Central to their argument is the idea that women's use of anonymity, signature and 'cross-gendered pseudonyms' helped to 'perform and transform' discourses of gender and 'gendered difference', by which they mean what was and what was not regarded as suitable material for woman's pen.[143]

In a similar way to Onslow's reading of the appeal of the flexibility of journalism for women, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical* argues that the magazine offered a 'liminal space between the public and private domains', a space in which the already ambiguous concepts of gender and professionalism could be further complicated.[144] Alexis Easley agrees, suggesting that 'ironically, at the same time that the periodical press constructed a limited, domestic role for women *novelists,* it provided women *journalists* with the opportunity to transgress the boundaries of these

[142] Hilary Fraser, Stephanie Green, and Judith Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.2.
[143] Fraser, Green and Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical,* p.11 and p.16.
[144] Fraser, Green and Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical,* p.5.

constraining identities through anonymous publication'.[145] For this reason, the woman editor, was in a particularly unique position for she normally had more control over a magazine than a female contributor and so could more fully exploit the 'liminal' nature of the magazine. Also useful to my own research is Fraser, Johnston and Green's reading of the editor's need to 'woo' or 'seduce' readers, most commonly through the periodical's house style, and this is a concept that I explore further in Chapter Three, in particular through an examination of the pictorial representation of Marryat as editor for she is often figured as a highly exotic and seductive character (seen in one image, for example, lounging on a divan with flowers in her hair and her body draped in soft flowing material (see figure 3.e). Marryat's bold editorial persona, therefore, provides a particularly striking visual representation of the editor's practice of 'wooing'.

Like *Gender and the Victorian Periodical*, Easley's *First-Person Anonymous* (2004) seeks to question the construction of gender in Victorian journalism. Easley's case studies focus on the publishing identities of Harriet Martineau, Christina Johnstone, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot, and Christina Rossetti. Whilst recognising the very real challenges faced by these women, Easley complicates Gilbert and Gubar's reading of anonymous publication as indicative of 'an anxiety of authorship' by suggesting that some women actively chose anonymity when developing their professional identities, rather than necessarily having it forced upon them. One example that is particularly relevant here is the career of the often neglected writer Christina Johnstone, who edited *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* between 1834 and 1846 and was the first woman to be paid to do so.[146] As Easley rightly notes, at a time when the people who wrote, edited and read mainstream magazines

[145] Alexis Easley, 'Authorship, Gender and Identity: George Eliot in the 1850s', *Women's Writing,* vol. 3, no. 2 (1997), p.148.
[146] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous,* p.10.

were assumed to be male, Johnstone's appointment in 1834 'can be seen as a marker of an important change in the Victorian publishing industry'.[147]

Easley suggests that although more and more women were entering journalism at this point, they tended to keep to specialist publications (such as *The Christian Lady's Magazine,* edited by Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna between 1834 and 1846), and so Johnstone's appointment to a mainstream magazine was not made public. Yet Easley argues that whilst assuming a male authorial voice, Johnstone 'also instituted editorial changes that seem intended to disrupt the implied masculinity of the periodical as a whole'.[148] Some seventeen years later, Marian Evans (not yet George Eliot) also remained anonymous whilst editing, as John Chapman was the only named editor of the *Westminster Review* in the 1850s, and so Eliot repeated Johnstone's practice, for Johnstone had encouraged the assumption that William Tait was in fact editor of *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*. Both women also assumed a male authorial voice, a practice that was appropriate within the context of the implied audience of their magazines.

As well as introducing Johnstone as an important figure in the history of the woman editor, Easley also offers an engaging analysis of Eliot's 'Silly Novels' which she links (as do Johnston and Fraser) to the debate over signature in the 1860s but also, more unusually, to the publication of *Felix Holt* (1866). Easley argues that in 'Silly Novels' we can trace Eliot replacing 'the image of the philanthropic or radical woman writer with an image of the cultured and ambiguously gendered author'.[149] However, the scope of Easley's study does not allow for examination of the implications of Eliot's other journalism published in the *Westminster Review* or her later fiction in which she explored the position of the female artist-professional, both

[147] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous,* p.66.
[148] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous,* p.69.
[149] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous,* p.11.

of which I address in Chapter One. Reading Eliot's journalism as 'ambiguously gendered', Easley suggests that at times her authorial voice seems to 'define itself in opposition to both the average man and the typical female author'.[150] So, for Easley, Eliot's journalistic voice seems to defy essentialist concepts of masculine and feminine writing styles; her narrative voice is often slippery, sometimes recognisable as both male and female within the same article.

In the first part of Chapter One I challenge Easley's reading, arguing that ultimately Eliot was publishing in a magazine that was, despite the gendered discourse that Brake has highlighted, male dominated, and therefore she tailored her style to suit the implied audience of the *Westminster Review* in essays such as 'Silly Novels' and 'Woman in France'. However, before I consider these articles in detail, I need to introduce the magazine in which they were first published and which Eliot edited. I will also consider those edited by Charlotte Yonge and Florence Marryat. The fiction of Eliot is well known, as is (although to a much lesser extent) that of Charlotte Yonge. Florence Marryat's work, however, is less familiar, yet, as I have been suggesting, all three women can be usefully studied in conjunction with each other. Their editorial careers are little known, and the magazines they edited are certainly not as familiar to readers today as their fiction is. Therefore in the next section I provide descriptions of these very different magazines, along with necessary contextual information, by examining a typical issue as edited by Eliot, Yonge or Marryat, and suggesting initial points of comparison as I introduce three different, but equally successful, women editors and their magazines.

[150] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous,* p.121.

**George Eliot and the *Westminster Review*, 1852-1854**

In her important study of George Eliot's neglected journalism, Fionnuala Dillane suggests that critics may have avoided writing about Eliot's editorial career due to the significant lack of material available, particularly between 1852 and 1854.[151] Dillane points out that the usual resources upon which Victorian scholars normally rely are missing for this period of Eliot's career. For example, there are no complete publishing records for the *Westminster Review* for the 1850s, and indeed as Eliot was not paid for her editorial work, her name would not have appeared on any record of salaries that may have survived. Therefore, as Dillane's research emphasises, any statements we might make about this period of Eliot's career must be drawn primarily from inference, from the textual evidence of the magazine itself and from Eliot's correspondence which offers occasional hints about the extent of her role within the magazine.[152]

Because of the lack of information about her editorial work, scholars often struggle to find appropriate titles for Eliot's role: Alexis Easley, for example, refers to her as the 'sub-editor' and 'assistant' editor of the *Westminster Review*, while others call her the *Westminster*'s 'co-editor'.[153] Yet the evidence of Eliot's letters and John Chapman's diaries clearly indicates that she was responsible for the day-to-day running and editing of the magazine.[154] Critical neglect of Eliot's journalism has also perhaps been influenced by greater interest in her affairs with John Chapman, Herbert Spencer and George Henry Lewes during the 1850s. Though biographical details are relevant and are included in my introduction here and my later discussion in Chapter

[151] Fionnuala Dillane, 'Before George Eliot: Marian Evans and the Mid-Victorian Periodical Press', unpublished PhD thesis (Trinity College Dublin, 2003), p.15.
[152] Dillane, 'Before George Eliot', p.15.
[153] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, p.101.
[154] For example, Eliot wrote to her friend Cara Bray in 1853: 'My table is covered with books - all to be digested by the editorial maw – I foresee terribly hard work for the next weeks' (*GEL:* I: 371). I will comment on this letter more in Chapter One.

One, such details merely inform my research, rather than provide the main focus of it. In Chapter One, I go on to examine how Eliot's journalistic career affected her developing professional identity and how this was reflected in her novels when writing about the female artist-professional. For now, my purpose is to introduce the *Westminster Review* and the context of Eliot's editorial work.

In 1850, when Eliot began working with John Chapman to prepare the 'New Series' of the *Westminster Review*, she was joining a well-respected and male-orientated journal that enjoyed a distinct cultural pedigree, founded upon 'a distinguished history as the organ of philosophical radicalism'.[155] Competing with quality quarterlies such as the Whig *Edinburgh Review* and the Tory *Quarterly Review*, the radical *Westminster* was aimed at a very different readership from Charlotte Yonge's religious magazine *The Monthly Packet* and Florence Marryat's sensational *London Society*. A 'high-priced' and 'bulky' journal, the *Westminster*'s target readership was professional men who would want to browse the journal in their clubs and offices.[156] The *London and Westminster Review* was founded by James Mill in 1824 and supported financially by Jeremy Bentham. The journal was originally intended as an 'organ for the radical political movement agitating for electoral reform', and under Mill's editorship it quickly gained a reputation for attracting quality, radical and intellectual contributors.[157] However, the journal was never truly profitable as a business, with sales averaging at 1,200 a quarter[158] and at times making substantial losses (including the substantial sum of £100 under Sir William

[155] Gordon S. Haight (ed.), *George Eliot and John Chapman with Chapman's Diaries* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1940), p.29.
[156] Laurel Brake, 'The *Westminster* and Gender and Mid-Century', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, vol. 33, no. 3 (Fall 2000), p.249.
[157] Ashton, *142 Strand*, p.83.
[158] Ashton, *142 Strand*, p.84.

Molesworth's editorship in 1836[159]). Subscription remained stable at 1,200 under William Hickson's editorship in the 1840s, when the magazine was merged with the *Foreign Quarterly* and a section of literary reviews was added.[160]

John Stuart Mill filled the editorial interregnum between Molesworth and Hickson, and under his guidance the *Westminster*'s reputation was secured as one of the most prestigious of the quality quarterlies of the time. Bucking the trend for anonymous publication, Mill introduced signature in 1836. Part of the reason for this change in editorial policy was that Mill attracted quality contributors whose names were worth publishing, and yet despite his success in securing 'big names', the running of the magazine itself became notoriously farcical: individual numbers appeared sporadically and formatting was changed so often that a uniform house style was not readily recognisable. In an effort to save money and recover the business, when Hickson replaced Mill in 1840 he dismissed the sub-editor (John Robertson) and took on all editorial duties himself (for which he was not paid).[161]

Hickson wrote many of the articles himself and reduced contributors' pay to ten guineas per article, leading to a significant drop in contributions and, therefore, sales.[162] The *Westminster Review* never paid particularly well, but contributors continued to be drawn to it nevertheless because of its reputation; George Henry Lewes, for example, considered that although the pay was poor, the magazine was influential with a reputation for showcasing intellectual contributors.[163] Under both Mill and Hickson, the general format of the journal comprised of a series of in-depth articles on contemporary issues, followed by a miscellaneous or notes section.

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[159] Haight (ed.), *George Eliot and John Chapman*, p.29.
[160] Walter E. Houghton and Esther Rhoads Houghton (eds), *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals 1824–1900*, 5 vols. (London: 1966–1990), vol. 3, p.52.
[161] Houghton and Houghton (eds), *Wellesley Index*, vol. 3, p.52.
[162] Haight (ed.), *George Eliot and John Chapman*, pp.28-29.
[163] Houghton and Houghton (eds), *Wellesley Index*, vol. 3, p.52.

Reflecting the readership's increasing interest in fiction, Hickson included a literary review section, as well as a more structured contents and index page, organised by subject and genre so that the reader could quickly find the review of interest to them.[164]

Though there was no official agreement with regard to Eliot's position at the magazine, what remains of the correspondence between her and Chapman during this period indicates a loose arrangement, on Eliot's insistence, that her position should be kept secret. 'With regard to the secret of the Editorship', she wrote to Chapman in June 1851:

> it will perhaps be the best plan for you to state, that for the present *you* are to be regarded as the responsible person, but that you employ an Editor in whose literary and general ability you confide (*GEL*: VIII: 23).

In 1850 John Chapman bought the *Westminster Review* from Hickson and secured Eliot as editor, though she was not officially called this. He made her responsible for the day-to-day running of the magazine whilst he managed the contributors inherited from his predecessor and attempted to secure new authors for the first number. Chapman was already familiar with the high quality of Eliot's work; she had already published her influential translation of David Friedrich Strauss's *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined* (1846) which, by 1850, had attracted 'a large amount of attention', as well as Ludwig Feurbach's *The Essence of Christianity* (1854), the only publication which was attributed to 'Marian Evans'.[165] Eliot's professional and personal association with Chapman was crucial to the development of her career at this time; as Donald Gray has noted 'through her association with [Chapman] and the

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[164] Dillane, 'Before George Eliot', p.82.

[165] Ashton, *142 Strand*, p.23. James Martineau wrote a favourable review in the *Westminster Review* (still under Hickson's editorship), as did Charles Wicksteed in Chapman's *Prospective Review*. Herbert Spencer recommended Eliot's translation to friends.

*Westminster* [Eliot] moved in one of the strong currents of intellectual and literary culture in London'.[166]

The secret of Eliot's editorship was initially well-kept. After receiving a visit from Chapman during which he tried (unsuccessfully) to secure an article for the 'New Series', Thomas Carlyle wrote to Robert Browning that '[Chapman says he has] an able editor (name can't be given), and such an array of "talent" as was seldom gathered before'.[167] Rosemary Ashton claims that Eliot's desire for secrecy can be explained by the fact that 'female editorship was unheard of at this time'.[168] But this statement needs qualifying: as we have already seen, female editorship, though rare, was certainly not 'unheard of'. Indeed, Eliot's position became more of an open secret than Ashton's comments imply, for contributors quickly became aware of who was really editing the *Westminster Review* once Eliot began corresponding with them regularly on Chapman's behalf. Furthermore, the 'Prospectus' with which the New Series opened referred to the 'NEWLY APPOINTED Editors', the plural leaving the reader in no doubt that more than one editor was involved.[169] Though there were a few women editors of other journals, a woman editing a journal like the *Westminster Review* was unprecedented at this period.[170] Brake has suggested that the 'anomaly of [Eliot's] situation upon arrival [at the *Westminster*] in 1851 as a *woman* journalist may be gauged by observing that no other woman editor existed at the time in the UK' and notes that Isabella Beeton would not take on editorship of the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* until 1857 and Bessie Rayner Parkes, Barbara

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[166] Donald Gray, 'George Eliot and her publishers', in George Levine (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to George Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.184.
[167] Thomas Carlyle to Robert Browning, 10 October 1851, cited in Ashton, *142 Strand,* p.93.
[168] Ashton, *142 Strand*, p.95.
[169] [George Eliot and John Chapman], 'Prospectus of the *Westminster Review*', in A. S. Byatt (ed.), *George Eliot: Selected Essays, Poems and Other Writings* (London: Penguin, 1990), p.4. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.
[170] Brake, 'The *Westminster* and Gender and Mid-Century', p.251.

Bodichon and Emily Davies would not begin the *Englishwoman's Journal* until 1858, a journal to which Eliot refused to contribute on the ground that 'a public display of inferior work by women would do more harm than good'.[171] Brake does not, however, acknowledge Charlotte Yonge, who in January 1851 was editing the first number of *The Monthly Packet*, in this list of women editors to whom Eliot's career is comparable. Eliot, then, perhaps more than Yonge or Marryat (who were editing magazines associated with feminised genres), had a heightened awareness of the unusual nature of her position.

Under Eliot's editorship, the *Westminster Review* received much praise, praise which was led by her future partner Lewes, writing in the *Leader*:

> The *Westminster Review,* since it passed into MR CHAPMAN's hands, has recovered the importance it acquired when under the editorship of JOHN STUART MILL. It is now a Review that people talk about, ask for at the clubs, and read with respect. The variety and general excellence of its articles are not surpassed by any Review.[172]

And indeed the first number of the New Series, within which Lewes found so much to praise, offers a useful example of a typical issue under Eliot's editorship, of what Eliot aimed to achieve throughout her time at the magazine. The precedent set in this first number of high standard articles from quality contributors who were recognised as radical intellectuals was one that Eliot fought hard to maintain throughout her period as editor. The table below gives the contents of the first number edited by Eliot published in January 1852, and is typical of an issue of the *Westminster Review* under her control. The list of contributors, on the left of the table, gives an indication of the 'distinguished group' of intellectuals that Eliot co-ordinated as editor, the type of men and women that she worked with on a day-to-day basis.[173] The titles of articles, on the right of the table, demonstrate the broad scope of topics addressed. From such

[171] George Eliot, cited in Catherine Sherri Smith, 'George Eliot, Straight Drag and the Masculine Investments of Feminism', *Women's Writing,* vol. 3, no. 2 (1996), p.98.
[172] George Henry Lewes, cited in Ashton, *142 Strand*, p.161.
[173] Haight (ed.), *George Eliot and John Chapman*, p.45.

information, we can glean an insight into Eliot's working conditions as editor of the *Westminster Review*, for it indicates who she worked with and what subjects she thought best for her contributors to address:

| | |
|---|---|
| John Chapman and George Eliot | Prospectus |
| William Johnson Fox | Representative Reform |
| Edward Forbes | Shell Fish: Their Ways and Works |
| William Rathbone Greg | The Relation Between Employers and Employed |
| James Anthony Froude | Mary Stuart |
| Francis William Newman | The Latest Continental Theory of Legislation |
| George Henry Lewes | Julia von Krüdener, as Coquette and Mystic |
| James Martineau | The Ethics of Christendom |
| Unidentified | Independent Contribution: Political Questions and Parties in France |
| George Eliot and Herbert Spencer | Contemporary Literature of England |
| Unidentified | Retrospective Survey of American Literature |
| Rufus Wilmot Griswold | Contemporary Literature of America |
| Jane Sinnett | Contemporary Literature of Germany |
| George Henry Lewes | Contemporary Literature of France |

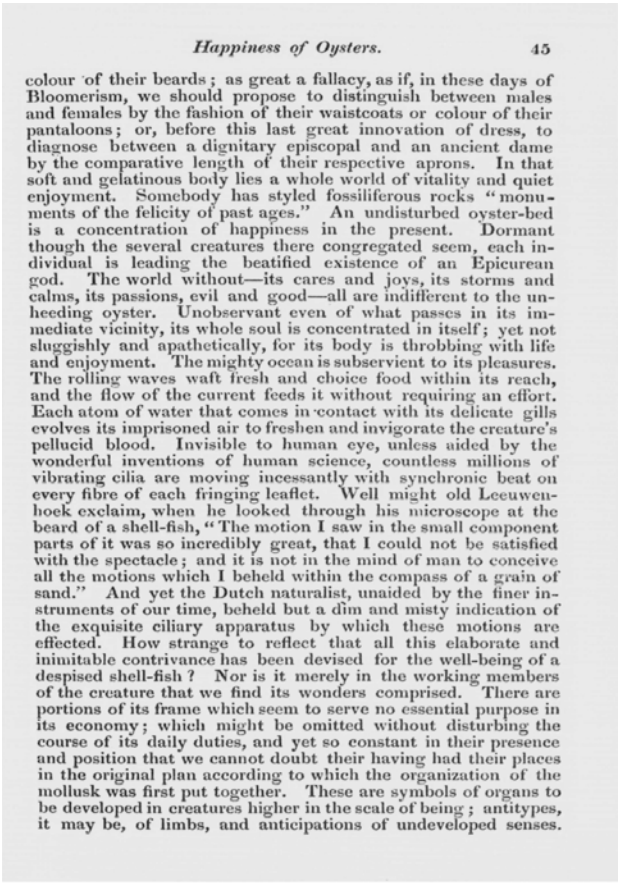
**Figure 1.a**

Not surprisingly, Eliot was extremely proud of this first number, writing to her friend Cara Bray: 'On the whole our number is very superior even in attractiveness to either the Edinburgh or the Quarterly' (*GEL*: II: 6).

The first article, the 'Prospectus' which Chapman had written and Eliot had heavily edited,[174] sets out the plans of the 'newly-appointed editors' for the

[174] See Ashton, *142 Strand,* pp.103-108.

*Westminster*, and their intention that it should be 'an instrument for the development and guidance of earnest thoughts on Politics, Social Philosophy, Religion and General Literature', so that they may 'confirm and extend' the journal's reputation as 'the organ of the most able and independent minds of the day' ('Prospectus', p.4). The 'Prospectus' listed progress, social philosophy, the extension of suffrage, free trade, radical reform, national education, religious questions and general literature as subjects of key interest. It is a wide-ranging list, engaging with contemporary debates about questions of religion, philosophy,



*Happiness of Oysters.* 45

colour of their beards; as great a fallacy, as if, in these days of Bloomerism, we should propose to distinguish between males and females by the fashion of their waistcoats or colour of their pantaloons; or, before this last great innovation of dress, to diagnose between a dignitary episcopal and an ancient dame by the comparative length of their respective aprons. In that soft and gelatinous body lies a whole world of vitality and quiet enjoyment. Somebody has styled fossiliferous rocks "monuments of the felicity of past ages." An undisturbed oyster-bed is a concentration of happiness in the present. Dormant though the several creatures there congregated seem, each individual is leading the beatified existence of an Epicurean god. The world without—its cares and joys, its storms and calms, its passions, evil and good—all are indifferent to the unheeding oyster. Unobservant even of what passes in its immediate vicinity, its whole soul is concentrated in itself; yet not sluggishly and apathetically, for its body is throbbing with life and enjoyment. The mighty ocean is subservient to its pleasures. The rolling waves waft fresh and choice food within its reach, and the flow of the current feeds it without requiring an effort. Each atom of water that comes in contact with its delicate gills evolves its imprisoned air to freshen and invigorate the creature's pellucid blood. Invisible to human eye, unless aided by the wonderful inventions of human science, countless millions of vibrating cilia are moving incessantly with synchronic beat on every fibre of each fringing leaflet. Well might old Leeuwenhoek exclaim, when he looked through his microscope at the beard of a shell-fish, "The motion I saw in the small component parts of it was so incredibly great, that I could not be satisfied with the spectacle; and it is not in the mind of man to conceive all the motions which I beheld within the compass of a grain of sand." And yet the Dutch naturalist, unaided by the finer instruments of our time, beheld but a dim and misty indication of the exquisite ciliary apparatus by which these motions are effected. How strange to reflect that all this elaborate and inimitable contrivance has been devised for the well-being of a despised shell-fish? Nor is it merely in the working members of the creature that we find its wonders comprised. There are portions of its frame which seem to serve no essential purpose in its economy; which might be omitted without disturbing the course of its daily duties, and yet so constant in their presence and position that we cannot doubt their having had their places in the original plan according to which the organization of the mollusk was first put together. These are symbols of organs to be developed in creatures higher in the scale of being; antitypes, it may be, of limbs, and anticipations of undeveloped senses.



**Figure 1.b**

science, history and literature. But more importantly, as Beryl Gray points out, the list of topics covered indicates the 'emphasis and status accorded to […] contemporary culture'.[175] This new emphasis on modern life was in part influenced by the repeal of stamp duty in 1855, which had the effect of speeding up both the production and demand for the latest news and reviews.[176] Eliot recognised this by commissioning articles on contemporary subjects. But emphasis still remained on quality of analysis; rather than the 'random notices [of new publications] that had formerly appeared'

[175] Beryl Gray, 'George Eliot and the *Westminster Review*', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, vol. 33, no. 3 (Fall 2000), p.220.
[176] Brake, 'The *Westminster* and Gender and Mid-Century', p.249.

before Eliot's editorship, substantial and detailed reviews of both British and European literature were now on offer.[177]

The 'Prospectus' was followed by the politically engaged piece by William Johnson Fox on the 'topical subject' of representative reform.[178] Dillane describes Fox's article as a 'weighty, challenging, if sometimes ponderous opening to the journal', and points out that Eliot wisely followed it with a light-hearted review by Edward Forbes of George Johnston's recent book on shellfish, *An Introduction to Conchology, or Elements of the Natural History of Molluscous Animals* (1850), reflecting the mid-Victorian fascination with natural history.[179] Changing the format of the journal to make it more reader-friendly, Eliot introduced 'summarising headlines' at the top of each right hand page[180] (see figure 1.b) which served to guide her reader through longer articles, encouraging them to read on with intriguing and slightly whimsical headlines such as the 'Happiness of Oysters' and 'Oysters of Ancient Days'.[181] Each article was also given a subject heading, mirroring the practice of *Blackwood's*, and the instalments in the index read like those of an 'encyclopaedia or dictionary'.[182]

Eliot also introduced the 'Independent Contribution' section, designed 'for the reception of articles ably setting forth opinions which, though not discrepant with the general spirit of the *Review,* may be at variance with the particular ideas or measures it will advocate' ('Prospectus', p.5). The unidentified author of the 'Independent Contribution' for January 1852 wrote about the current political situation in France, to which Eliot added a footnote making it clear that while the editors felt that the piece

[177] Gray, 'George Eliot and the *Westminster Review',* p.220.
[178] Dillane, 'Before George Eliot', p.56.
[179] Dillane, 'Before George Eliot', p.86.
[180] Dillane, 'Before George Eliot', p.85.
[181] Edward Forbes, 'Shell Fish: Their Ways and Works', *The Westminster Review*, vol. 51 (January 1852), p.45 and p.49.
[182] Dillane, 'Before George Eliot', p.85.

provided 'very interesting and important' facts, they nevertheless stated their 'dissent' from the opinion expressed in the concluding paragraph, 'that the possession of power by the French Socialists would, in the present state of things, be an immediate benefit'.[183] The 'Independent Contribution' was a section that Eliot did not feel worked well, and she quickly withdrew it: on reflection, she considered that to include an 'Independent Contribution' would be to imply that the rest of the contributions were somehow not independent, in direct contrast to the promise in the 'Prospectus' of the *Westminster* being an organ for independent minds. It was a section that Chapman re-introduced when Eliot left the magazine, and which, somewhat ironically, given this section's sub-title of 'the expression of opinion by men of high mental power and culture' ('Prospectus', p.5), Mona Caird used as a platform for her thoughts on 'Marriage' and 'Ideal Marriage' (1888).

As has been well documented, Chapman's involvement with the magazine was largely limited to controlling the finances, often with disastrous consequences.[184] But Eliot handled the day-to-day running of the magazine: she contacted the contributors, read the unsolicited articles, proof-read, drafted and edited those articles, arranged the proof, and saw it through the press. Evidence from her correspondence suggests that one of her biggest concerns throughout was to increase sales. When she published her first number in January 1852 circulation was at 1,000, which was low even for a quarterly that had never sold very well. Her early correspondence shows her agonising over each number for which she was responsible, pushing herself and her contributors to produce the best product on the market: 'the articles for the Review are on the whole unsatisfactory', she complained to her friend Cara Bray in

[183] [George Eliot], *The Westminster Review*, vol. 51 (January 1852), pp.227-228.
[184] See Ashton, *142 Strand,* p.154-192.

September 1852, 'I fear a discerning public will think this number a sad falling off' (*GEL*: II: 55).

Such 'fears' are in fact indicative of Eliot's aggressive business-sense, for she often compared her own band of contributors and subjects to those of the *Westminster*'s nearest rivals. She wrote to Chapman:

> I have noticed the advertisement of the British Quarterly this morning. Its list of subjects is excellent. I wish you could contrive to let me see the number when it comes out. They have one subject of which I am jealous – "Pre-Raphaelism in Painting and Literature." We have no good writer on such subjects on our staff. Ought we not, too, to try and enlist David Masson, who is one of the British Quarterly set? (*GEL*: II: 48)

So although her name was not known beyond the close circle of the *Westminster*'s contributors, Eliot was nevertheless hugely influential as editor for two reasons: firstly, under her guidance the magazine regained its link with its prestigious past as it once more became respected as a medium for radical thought, as it had been under John Stuart Mill. But with Eliot the magazine also gained a sense of modernity through the changes to formatting which lent the journal a much-needed distinct house style. How this period working for the press affected Eliot's developing sense of professional identity is the subject of my discussion in Chapter One. In the next section, however, I move on to introduce Charlotte Yonge's editorship, for just as Eliot was preparing to begin her editorial career in 1851, so Charlotte Yonge was preparing to edit the first number of her magazine *The Monthly Packet*, to which I now turn.

**Charlotte Yonge, *The Monthly Packet*, 1851-1899 and *The Barnacle*, 1863-1867**

Charlotte Yonge was the longest running editor of the nineteenth century; however, she was a successful novelist before she became an editor.[185] With strong links to the Oxford Movement, Yonge benefited from a well-connected circle of close

[185] As Barbara Onslow points out, Yonge edited 80 volumes of *The Monthly Packet* between 1851 and 1899. Onslow, *Women of the Press,* p.164.

family and friends that proved crucial in the shaping of her career; this group comprised the Kebles, the Dysons, the Mozleys and the Coleridges.[186] As I have already suggested, such informal networks often formed an important part of many women's literary careers: George Eliot's friends Charles and Sara Bray, for example, first introduced her to John Chapman, through whom she gained her first professional post; Captain Frederick Marryat's connections and reputation in London helped to secure his daughter Florence's editorial position, and likewise the Mozley family, whom Yonge met through the Kebles, did much to facilitate the beginnings of her professional career. Anne Mozley edited *The Magazine for the Young*, an Anglican magazine published by her brothers and aimed at a working-class readership. Yonge contributed to this periodical from the first number in 1842 onwards, even when she began editing her own magazine. Though *The Barnacle*, a little-known magazine, is the main focus of my discussion in Chapter Two, I do include *The Monthly Packet* in my analysis and, as such, introduce both magazines here.[187]

As Amy de Gruchy has explained, during the 1840s a new Anglo-Catholic set developed which 'approved of flamboyance and excitement in liturgy and encouraged emotion'.[188] The main literary vehicle for this set was *The Churchman's Companion*, edited by Felicia Mary Skene (1862-1880), to which Yonge contributed in the early 1850s; however by August 1850 John Keble was planning a rival periodical that would champion pure Tractarian ideology. Yonge had already published a number of stories in the *Church Companion* and was eager for a literary career; she became the

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[186] For more on Yonge and the Oxford Movement, see Barbara Dennis *Charlotte Mary Yonge (1823–1901), Novelist of the Oxford Movement* (Lewiston: Edward Mellon Press, 1992).

[187] As Valerie Sanders and Barbara Onslow both note, Yonge also edited the *Monthly Paper of Sunday Teaching* (1865-1875) and *Mothers in Council* (1890–1901). I have chosen to focus my research on *The Monthly Packet* and *The Barnacle* because I am specifically interested in how these two magazines related to one another at this stage in Yonge's career. See Valerie Sanders, *Eve's Renegades*, p.207 and Barbara Onslow, *Women of the Press*, p.165.

[188] Amy de Gruchy, 'The Monthly Packet', in Cecilia Bass (ed.), *Journal of the Charlotte M. Yonge Fellowship* ([no publication details given]: 1995), p.2.

obvious choice as editor and correspondence with her literary mentor Marianne Dyson at this time buzzed with plans and ideas for the new journal.[189]

Among the subjects they debated was the future periodical's name: *The Maidens' Manual* was considered but eventually *The Monthly Packet of Evening Readings for Younger Members of the English Church* was settled upon. The title gives an indication of the intended readership of the magazine but also the setting within which it was meant to be read. Reading this journal was intended to be a family event of 'evening reading' that would prove valuable to all members of the household, including servants, not just the younger children. The Yonge family, however, privately referred to the periodical by the pet name of 'The Old Codger', a reference to the 'steady old codgers' who would be pleased by the didactic, educational and conservative house style.[190]

Like George Eliot's editorship, but significantly unlike Florence Marryat's Yonge's appointment was not puffed in the periodical press. *The Monthly Packet* was advertised in 1850 and 1851 as a new periodical on the market but no editor or authors' names were published and indeed literary gossip columns only began to link Yonge's name with the journal as late as 1869, when *The Derby Mercury* noted how many 'lady writers [there were] now writing in the magazines', reporting that 'Miss Yonge, authoress of the *Heir of Redclyffe*, is editing the *Monthly Packet*'.[191] Unlike the *Westminster Review*'s target readership of formally educated and politically radical men, and *London Society*'s readership of middle-class metropolitans with

[189] Marianne Dyson acted as Yonge's literary mentor early in her career, and indeed Yonge affectionately referred to her as her 'Slave Driver'. Dyson was an important professional role model for Yonge, for despite being in constant ill health, she nevertheless published children's novels and helped to set up a girls' boarding school. Yonge's long-running *Conversations on the Catechism,* which was serialised in *The Monthly Packet* between 1851 and 1862, was developed from stories she had written for Dyson's students.

[190] Margaret Laura Mare and Alicia C. Percival, *Victorian Best-Seller: the World of Charlotte M. Yonge* (London: Harrap, 1947), p.140.

[191] [Anonymous], 'Literary Gossip', *The Derby Mercury* (22 September 1869), [no page number given].

fashionable aspirations, *The Monthly Packet* was aimed primarily at young women of confirmation age. The 'Introductory Letter' for the first number, written by Yonge, addressed itself to 'young girls, or maidens, or young ladies, whichever you like to be called, who are above the age of childhood, and who are either looking back on school-days with regret, or else pursuing the most important part of education, namely, self-education'.[192]

However, the magazine did not cater to the same market as *Girl's Own Paper* or *Atlanta*, for Yonge also addressed 'boys of the same age' and 'younger readers, either of the drawing-room, the servants' hall, or the lending library'.[193] Gruchy claims that Yonge 'invented the teenage girls' magazine' and indeed, despite not adopting the more obviously feminine title of *The Maiden's Manual*, *The Monthly Packet* nevertheless became a largely female-orientated journal.[194] It would be misleading, therefore, to categorise the articles and fiction published in this journal as children's literature for the content of the 'Introductory Letter' indicates that the intended readership was wider than this, designed to include children of both sexes, teenagers, and young adults of all classes. The remit of the magazine was to help form character at a crucial age:

> It has been said that every one forms their own character between the ages of fifteen and five-and-twenty, and this Magazine is meant to be in some degree a help to those who are thus forming it; not as a guide, since that is the part of deeper and graver books, but as a companion in times of recreation, which may help you to perceive how to bring your religious principles to bear upon your daily life.[195]

So even though it was to form part of 'evening reading', primarily recreational, the emphasis of the magazine was didactic, focused upon the religious instruction of the younger members of the family. Of course, Yonge's was not the only religious

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[192] [Charlotte Yonge], 'Introductory Letter', *The Monthly Packet,* vol. 1 (January 1851), p.1.
[193] [Yonge], 'Introductory Letter', p.1.
[194] Amy de Gruchy, 'The Monthly Packet', *Papers Presented at the Charlotte M. Yonge Fellowship Inaugural Conference* ([no publication details given]: 1995), p.3.
[195] [Charlotte Yonge], 'Introductory Letter', p.1.

magazine on the market but whilst other rival magazines, such as *The Churchman's Companion*, experienced only limited success, Yonge's journal ran for nearly fifty years, and this was largely due to her skill in handling the dual role of author-editor, for, like Marryat, she contributed her own work to the magazine throughout her period of editorship.

The table below gives the contents of the issue for July 1864, which is typical of *The Monthly Packet* under Yonge's editorship. The list of contributors, on the left of the table, gives an indication of how little we still know about them, though it is certainly possible that Yonge wrote most of the articles.[196] Indeed, Yonge's early correspondence shows her attempts to recruit more contributors in order to lessen the strain she felt: 'You really must beg, borrow or steal something to help me', she wrote to her friend Elizabeth Barnett in 1850.[197] The titles of articles, on the right of the table, indicate the broad scope of topics addressed and offer a surprising link to the *Westminster Review*, for Yonge's magazine shared many of the interests that preoccupied Eliot's, including history and religion. From this information it is possible to gain an insight into Yonge's working conditions as editor of *The Monthly Packet*:

| | |
|---|---|
| Unidentified | Meditations on the Collects. St. James the Apostle |
| Unidentified | The German Year: July |
| Charles Raikes | The Englishman in India, by Charles Raikes, Sometime Commissioner of Lahore |

[196] Unlike the *Westminster Review,* which has benefited from the extensive research of the editors of the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*, *The Monthly Packet* has not been formally catalogued and indexed, though a project of cataloguing the journal is currently underway and will be made publicly available. See Charlotte Mitchell, Ellen Jordan and Helen Schinske (eds), *The Letters of Charlotte Mary Yonge (1823–1901)*, http://eprints.ucl.ac.uk/13734/3/Yongesecondbatchto1859.pdf, accessed 8 April 2009, p.71.

[197] Mitchell, Jordan and Schinske (eds), *The Letters of Charlotte Mary Yonge*, p.84.

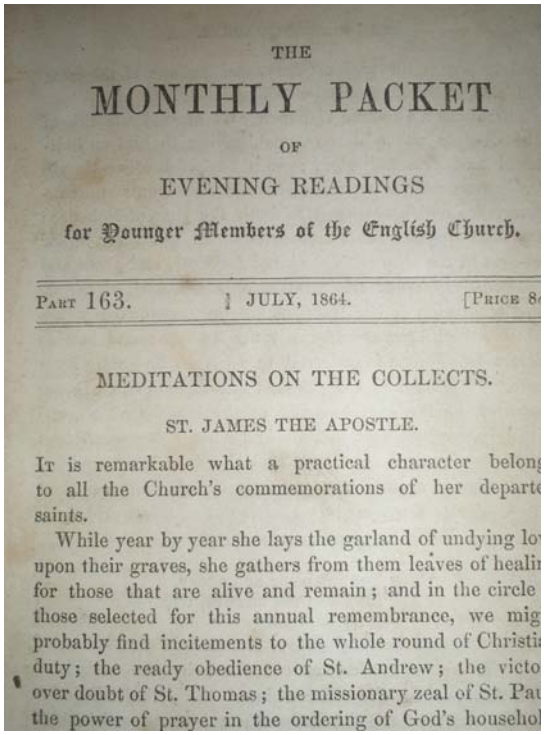
| | |
|---|---|
| Charlotte Yonge | Cameos from English History: Prince Hal |
| Unidentified | Thinking for Oneself |
| Unidentified | Recollections of Parochial Work in Ireland |
| Unidentified | Our Flitting |
| Unidentified | The Love Spinning Day: Reminiscences of North Wales |
| F. M. | Matrimonial Rites |
| Unidentified | A Word to Visitors to the Crystal Palace |
| Unidentified | Hints on Reading |
| Charlotte Yonge | Notice to Correspondents |

**Figure 1.c**

Just as there are important sources missing for the *Westminster Review* that make some statements about Eliot's editorship conjecture, so too for *The Monthly Packet*. Because it is as yet un-catalogued, any statements we might make about authorship must be made from inference, evidence from the text itself and the letters of Yonge that are currently available. Yonge was not without offers for contributions, it would appear, for every number carried rejections in the 'Notices to Correspondents'. In July 1864, Yonge declined 'with thanks' three offerings: 'The Death of Zwingle; Rest, &c.; The Watchers' ('Zwingle' being a possible error for 'Zwingli').[198]

[198] [Charlotte Yonge], 'Notice to Contributors', *The Monthly Packet,* vol. 28 (July 1864), p.112.

As figure 1.d indicates, the design of the magazine was similar to that of the *Westminster Review*: plain, without illustration and simple in format and layout. Unlike the often colourful *London Society*, illustrations, particularly in the early numbers, were extremely rare in *The Monthly Packet* and tended only to be included in special Christmas editions.



THE

MONTHLY PACKET

OF

EVENING READINGS

for Younger Members of the English Church.

PART 163. | JULY, 1864. [PRICE 8

MEDITATIONS ON THE COLLECTS.

ST. JAMES THE APOSTLE.

IT is remarkable what a practical character belon to all the Church's commemorations of her departe saints.

While year by year she lays the garland of undying lo upon their graves, she gathers from them leaves of heali for those that are alive and remain; and in the circle those selected for this annual remembrance, we mig probably find incitements to the whole round of Christi duty; the ready obedience of St. Andrew; the victo over doubt of St. Thomas; the missionary zeal of St. Pa the power of prayer in the ordering of God's household

**Figure 1.d**

This layout reflects that the emphasis of both the *Westminster Review* and *The Monthly Packet* was on self-improvement and learning, very unlike the focus on entertainment and amusement reflected in the design of Florence Marryat's *London Society*. As with the *Westminster Review* and *London Society,* an editorial preface or introduction was not normally included; instead the magazine consisted of a contents page which listed articles alphabetically, without authors' names, followed by the opening article which was usually written by Yonge. The only signed contribution for July 1864 was part of a series by Charles Raikes (1812–1885), an East India Company civil servant and commissioner for Lahore in the 1850s who retired in 1860 and published *An Englishman in India* in 1867. In the serial in *The Monthly Packet*, Raikes wrote about the history of minor historical figures and related their experiences to his own: for the July 1864 number, that figure was Sir Thomas

Munro, an army officer for the East India Company.[199] Munro was central to the reform of Indian land tenure, and Raikes's serial describes his career, but also emphasises the temptations of drink and gambling that Munro faced and overcame through hard work and dedication.

As I have suggested, a typical number of *The Monthly Packet* was not dissimilar to the *Westminster Review*, for the aim of both was to enlighten the reader by means of serious and informative articles. These often discussed historical subjects; in January 1852 Froude explored the figure of Mary Stuart for the *Westminster*, and in July 1854 Yonge explored 'Prince Hal' as part of her long-running series in *The Monthly Packet* called 'Cameos from English History'. In this piece, Yonge sought to correct what she called the 'often incorrect' details of Shakespeare's *Henry IV*.[200] This series often combined instruction on historical subjects as well as literary. Appropriately for a Tractarian publication, history was often infused with religious instruction, such as the unidentified 'Meditations on the Collects. St. James the Apostle' and 'Recollections of Parochial Work in Ireland'. Unlike James Martineau's radical piece in the *Westminster*, 'The Ethics of Christendom', Yonge's articles combined the historical and religious for a very conservative purpose, emphasising the importance of family and obedience.

An interest in human character and family life in Europe is also a distinctive feature of *The Monthly Packet*. The anonymous 'The German Year: July' mirrors the interest in human character that is evident in 'The Englishman in India'. Whereas in Raike's serial, aspects of Indian culture are described in detail, the author of 'The German Year' assumes that the reader will already be familiar with the subject,

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[199] Martha McLaren, 'Munro, Sir Thomas, first baronet (1761–1827)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19549, accessed 4 May 2009].

[200] [Charlotte Yonge], 'Cameos from English History: Prince Hal', in *The Monthly Packet,* vol. 28 (July 1864), p.26.

describing social rituals and practices with little comment. The serial 'Our Flitting' is a travelogue in which the narrator describes various cities on his tour; in July 1864 it was Fribourg in Switzerland. The anonymous 'The Love Spinning Day: Reminiscences of North Wales' keeps the focus on British customs, with a description of rural Welsh farming practices and mythology. The emphasis is often on oral history, the narrative usually taking the form of a metanarrative in which the narrator writes a letter, describing his meeting with a local person, whose story he then goes on to relate.

There was sometimes a reference to contemporary issues. The recent marriage of Louis-Philippe Albert of Orléans, Count of Paris to his cousin Princess Marie-Isabelle of Orléans in 1864 was used as an opportunity for discussing current 'Matrimonial Rites'. However, the main interest is in history and the difference between countries, and how current wedding traditions (and the word 'wed') came about. In 'A Word to Visitors to the Crystal Palace', the anonymous contributor urges her readers to visit the stall for the Association for Promoting the General Welfare of the Blind in the recently moved Crystal Palace. *The Monthly Packet* thus shares with the *Westminster Review* a sense of contemporary events, as well as a sense of social responsibility. However, Yonge infused her magazine with the need for active charity, and articles such as this one in July 1864 regularly urged readers to actively support worthy causes. Whereas the *Westminster* discussed and debated, *The Monthly Packet* prompted: in 'pleading' with the reader for 'at least one glance from the visitors to the Crystal Palace at the Stall of the Association for Promoting the General Welfare of the Blind' the magazine emphasised its religious tone.[201]

[201] [Anonymous], 'A Word to Visitors to the Crystal Palace', in *The Monthly Packet,* vol. 28 (July 1864), p.104.

Reviews of contemporary literature (British, American, and European) made up a substantial part of the *Westminster Review*, but Yonge's magazine had a limited review section entitled 'Hints on Reading'. This was a regular feature in which it is most likely that the editor reviewed recent publications: in July 1864, Frances Wynne's *The Dairy of a Lady of a Quality* (1864) and Mrs S. C. Rochat's *Harry's Help* (1864) were amongst those reviewed. Echoing the language of Eliot's 'Silly Novels', the reviewer called Rochat's novel 'one of the silly little unnatural stories, the cause of whose publication is a mere mystery to us'.[202] As in the *Westminster,* serious novels were valued over the 'silly' and popular. Like Marryat's *London Society,* but unlike the *Westminster Review*, fiction made up a large part of *The Monthly Packet*. Normally, a novel by the editor ran as the lead serial, but in July 1864 there was no serial from Yonge. The anonymous 'Thinking for Oneself' complemented the magazine's emphasis on faith and family duty with an episode describing a man wrongly imprisoned for theft who finds strength through praying to bear his ordeal, and be restored to justice.

*The Monthly Packet*, however, was not the only magazine that Yonge edited. By 1859 she had settled into her role as editor and *The Monthly Packet* was running smoothly with a loyal base of regular readers. It was at this point that Mary Coleridge, Yonge's cousin, suggested that she become mentor for 'a group of eager, merry schoolgirls'[203] with 'time on their hands' and in need of 'a spur to their energies'.[204] Christabel Coleridge, cousin to Mary and granddaughter of Samuel Taylor, later replaced Yonge as editor of *The Monthly Packet* and described Yonge as 'Minerva to a set of young owls', but Yonge described herself as 'Mother Goose to a brood of

[202] [Anonymous], 'Hints on Reading', *The Monthly Packet*, vol. 28 (July 1864), p.112.
[203] Mary Anderson, one of the 'Goslings', cited in Christabel Coleridge, *Charlotte Mary Yonge, Her Life and Letters* (London: Macmillan, 1903), p.292.
[204] Coleridge, *Charlotte Mary Yonge*, p.201.

goslings'.[205] The differentiation, as Julia Courtney has recently highlighted, is significant.[206] Instead of opting for the classical character of Minerva (which happened to be one of George Eliot's pet names), Yonge chose the playful and domestic figure of Mother Goose, best known as the 'homely, maternal weaver of nursery rhymes and stories', as a more fitting persona for the mentoring role she was about to undertake.[207]

The 'Goslings', the network of young women which Yonge mentored during the 1860s, comprised not only of the relatives, and their friends, of the Yonge and Coleridge families, but also of some avid readers of Yonge's fiction and *The Monthly Packet.* In *Victorian Best-Seller: the World of Charlotte Yonge*, Margaret Mare and Alicia C. Percival explain that:

> Through *The Monthly Packet* [Yonge] had become the oracle of many a young lady in her 'teens' and from among these was formed during the eighteen-sixties an inner circle over which Miss Yonge exercised an influence typical of that which she wielded in less degree over her wider and unknown youthful public. […] Accordingly, "Cousin Charlotte" was set up as a "Mother Goose" to a society of "Goslings," who submitted monthly sets of questions and answers to her on all subjects in science and art. […] Christabel Coleridge, who afterwards become Miss Yonge's biographer, was one of the original "Goslings," and Mrs Henry Wood, as well as others who later became writers of some reputation in their day, was in her childhood a member of the society, and enjoyed the stimulus of Miss Yonge's leadership in these intellectual pleasures.[208]

Mary Augusta Ward was one of the more well-known Goslings who went on to have a successful literary career; however, Mare and Percival's claim that the middle-aged Ellen Wood was part of this group is obviously an error for Wood's career

was at its height in 1861 with the publication of *East Lynne*, and she was too well established in her career, as well as too advanced in years, to be a Gosling.

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[205] Coleridge, *Charlotte Mary Yonge*, p.201.
[206] See Julia Courtney, 'Mother Goose's Brood: Some Followers of Charlotte Yonge and their Novels', in Julia Courtney & Clemence Schultze (eds) *Characters and Scenes: Studies in Charlotte M. Yonge* (Abingdon, Berkshire: Beechcroft Books, 2007), p190-191.
[207] U. C. Knoepflmacher, *Ventures into Childland: Victorians, Fairy Tales, and Femininity* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p.27.
[208] Mare and Percival, *Victorian Best-Seller*, p.200.

The Goslings began as a type of private correspondence club in which monthly questions were set and responses sent in for Yonge to critique and edit. The correspondence quickly developed into one home-made volume of a quarterly illustrated magazine which Yonge oversaw, edited and modelled on the


**Figure 1.e [Anonymous], [Opening Illustration], *The Barnacle*, vol. 4 (June 1864).**

*Hursley Magazine* which she had read as a child.[209] Julia Courtney has described *The Barnacle* as a small manuscript magazine, meaning that it was handwritten, bound in leather and produced privately for circulation between the small group of Goslings, not intended for general public consumption.[210] An illustration from an early number (see figure 1.e) indicates that the title makes a reference to the Barnacle goose.

[209] Coleridge, *Charlotte Mary Yonge*, p.202.
[210] See Julia Courtney, 'The Barnacle: A Manuscript Magazine of the 1860s', in Claudia Nelson and Lynne Vallone (eds), *The Girl's Own: Cultural Histories of the Anglo –American Girl 1830-1915* (Arkansas and London: University of Georgia Press, 1994), currently the only article dedicated to *The Barnacle*, pp.71-97.

Unlike *The Monthly Packet*, *The Barnacle* often carried an editorial introduction from Yonge, but no contents page, and comprised a mix of poetry, articles on what the Goslings were currently reading or places they had recently visited, a large number of illustrations (see figure 1.g)

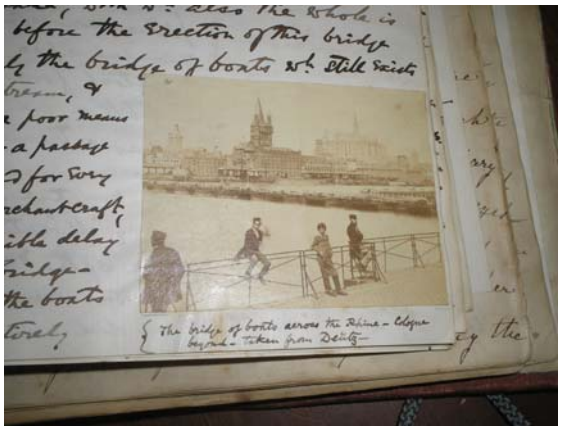

**Figure 1.f [Anonymous], 'A Few Notes on a Tour Abroad: Part 1',** ***The Barnacle,*** **vol. 10 (Christmas 1865).**

and even photographs pasted onto the magazine's pages (see figure 1.f). Research into this magazine is still very limited and the only illustration that has been published (one that I include in Chapter Two) is in Georgina Battiscombe's biography of Yonge. I discuss the illustrations of Yonge as Mother Goose in detail in Chapter Two and consider how this persona helped to define Yonge's professional identity. However, in the final section of this introduction, I move on to the 1870s, a time when George Eliot's career in journalism was behind her, Charlotte Yonge's


**Figure 1.g [Anonymous],** ***The Barnacle,*** **vol. 2 (Christmas Number 1863).**

was continuing, but *The Barnacle* had ceased to be produced, and Florence Marryat's editorial career was just beginning.

**Florence Marryat and *London Society*, 1872–1876**

Like Charlotte Yonge, Florence Marryat had a successful career as a popular novelist before she became an editor. Her first novel, *Love's Conflict*, enjoyed moderate success and tentative praise from critics.[211] The unusually supportive response from critics to a sensation novel was due in no small part to the reputation of Florence's father, Captain Frederick Marryat. Now probably best remembered for his best-seller *Peter Simple* (1834), Frederick Marryat (1772–1848) was a naval officer turned novelist who was well connected in London's literary circles. As J. K. Laughton has noted, Marryat's first novel, *The Naval Officer or, Scenes and Adventures in the Life of Frank Mildmay* (1829), 'took the public by storm: the book was a literary and financial success'.[212] Significantly, in light of his daughter's subsequent career, Frederick Marryat was the editor of the liberal periodical the *Metropolitan Magazine* between 1832 and 1835, within which he serialised some of his most popular novels. Indeed, Christopher Lloyd has suggested that Frederick Marryat should be regarded as *the* first author-editor; the first novelist who used the periodical he was editing as a vehicle for his own fiction. In employing this publishing strategy, Lloyd has suggested that Marryat was:

> responsible for an important innovation in publishing which had serious effects on the architecture of the Victorian novel. Most of the great novels of the last century were published in this way [serially]. Ainsworth was the first to follow Marryat's example in publishing his own work in his own magazine; Dickens and Thackeray followed in *Household Words* and the *Cornhill.*[213]

Lloyd's identification of Frederick Marryat as the first author-editor is significant for Florence clearly followed her father's model by showcasing her fiction in *London*

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[211] For a comprehensive survey of the publishing history of *Love's Conflict*, see Maunder (ed.), 'Introduction', *Domestic Sensationalism.*

[212] J. K. Laughton, 'Marryat, Frederick (1792–1848)', rev. Andrew Lambert, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2006, [http://www.oxforddnb.com.voyager.chester.ac.uk/view/article/18097, accessed 14 Jan 2008].

[213] Christopher Lloyd cited in Donald Hawes, 'Marryat and Dickens: A Personal and Literary Relationship', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction,* vol. 2, (1972), pp.54-55.

*Society* during the 1870s, including the novels *No Intentions* (1874), *Open! Sesame!* (1875) and *My Own Child* (1876).

As I have already mentioned, *London Society: a Monthly Magazine of Light and Amusing Literature* was one of many metropolitan magazines that sprung up during the boom in the periodical press of the 1860s, and as such competed against other literary monthlies including Braddon's *Belgravia,* G. A. Sala's *Temple Bar* and Mrs S. C. Hall's *St. James's Magazine*. Like the *Westminster Review,* the title *London Society* emphasised the centrality of the magazine, placing it at the heart of the capital. But unlike the

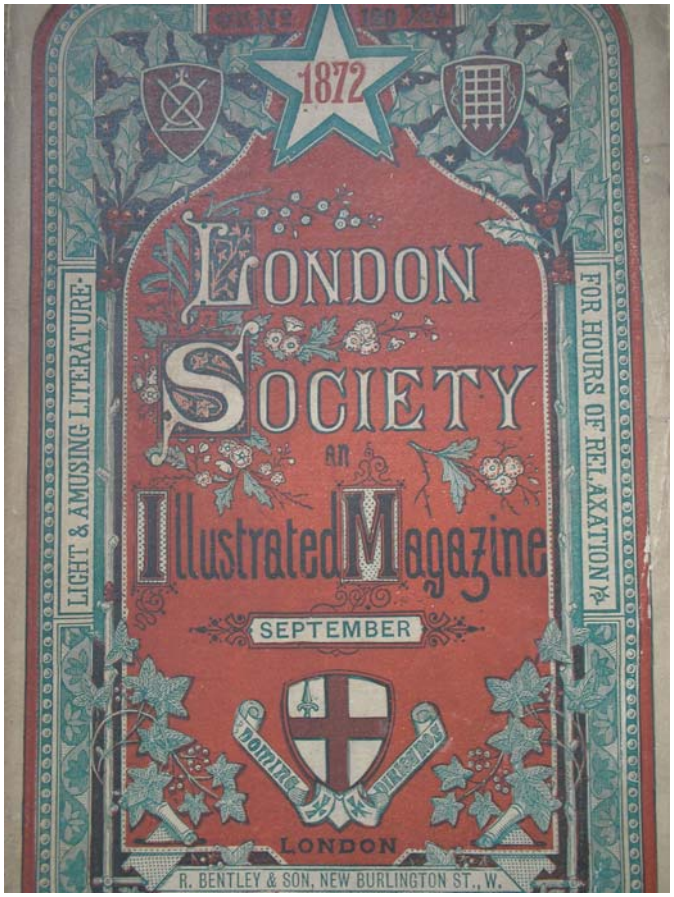


**Figure 1.h [Front cover illustration], *London Society* (September 1872).**

*Westminster,* with that magazine's emphasis on radical politics and intellectual debate, the emphasis of this magazine was on 'light' and 'amusing' literature.

The advertisements in the front and back covers of the unbound editions suggest that the readership was largely female, with an emphasis on beauty products, medicine and furnishing the family home. These advertisements sold everything for the home from glass chandeliers, to the latest lighting which reduced the 'heat, smoke or smell', to Johnson, Johnson and Co.'s tea and the 'literary machine', a kind of book

chair designed for 'invalid couches' and 'bed tables'.[214] More personal items were also advertised, such as 'Mrs S A Allen's Hair Restorer', which promised to revive, renew, and restore the original and natural colour of grey or faded hair', and 'Gowland's Lotion', which addressed itself to 'Ladies riding, promenading, or exposed to the weather at this Season', and promised that such women will 'immediately, on the application of this celebrated Preparation, experience its extraordinary genial qualities. It produces and sustains GREAT PURITY AND DELICACY OF COMPLEXION'.[215] However, the emphasis placed on furnishing the home, as well as more general advertisements for whisky, wines and spirits, steel pens and tobacco, suggest that this magazine may have been intended to have been read aloud in the home, like *The Monthly Packet.*

James Hogg founded *London Society* in 1862 and, in keeping with current fashion, maintained a policy of largely anonymous contributions. However, when the journal was purchased by the Bentleys in 1870s, Henry Blackburn replaced Hogg and phased out anonymous publication, reflecting the increasing preference for signature. In the mid-1860s, circulation figures reached a high of 20,000 and both Blackburn and Marryat maintained these.[216] As the subtitle of the journal suggests, the emphasis was on popular literature and high-quality illustrations; as such, the magazine typically comprised short stories, poems and articles on topical issues. The *Waterloo Dictionary* describes the magazine's typical content as made up of 'engravings, tales, sketches, miscellaneous papers, poetry, advertisements, novelettes, short stories, serials, thumbnail studies in the London streets'.[217] However, a large aspect of the

[214] [Anonymous], *London Society*, [no volume number] (February 1874), [no page number].
[215] [Anonymous], *London Society*, [no volume number] (February 1874), [no page number].
[216] Maunder, 'Introduction', *Domestic Sensationalism,* p.xiii.
[217] Cited in Beth Palmer, 'Strategies of Sensation and the Transformation of the Press, 1860-1880: Mary Braddon, Florence Marryat and Ellen Wood, Female Author-Editors, and the Sensation

magazine's appeal was visual, as the elaborate front cover of the unbound editions indicates (see figure 1.h). Because illustrations were an important part of *London Society*'s house style, Marryat inherited a bank of skilled illustrators from Henry Blackburn including Mary Ellen Edwards, F. A. Fraser, Harry Furniss and George Cruickshank.

Like George Eliot, living in London helped Marryat to secure her editorial position. Although she did not divorce her first husband, Thomas Ross Church, until 1878, Marryat separated from him in 1871 and moved to St. John's Wood, London, a fashionable area for artists and writers. She also began to act as her own agent and has been described as being 'well able to hold her own in the male world of magazine editors and journalists'.[218] Marryat's professional life during the 1870s was extremely busy, successful and varied. She later described keeping an 'open house' every Tuesday evening, which 'a large number of literary men' regularly attended.[219] She also explained that she spent her time during the early 1870s 'largely employed on the London press, and constantly sent to report on anything novel or curious, and likely to afford matter for an interesting article' (*There is No Death,* p.165). Indeed, she published articles in many magazines including *Temple Bar*, *Belgravia, The Western Mail, Tinsley's Magazine, The London Journal* and *The Gentlewoman's Magazine,* as well as more specialist publications like *The Spiritualist Newspaper*.

Around this time she also became involved in the theatre (a career which would later complement her literary work), writing the successful melodrama *Miss Chester* with Sir Charles Young (who was a regular contributor to *London*

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Phenomenon in Mid-Victorian Magazine Publishing', unpublished D.Phil thesis (University of Oxford, 2008), p.214.

[218] Maunder, 'Introduction', *Domestic Sensationalism*, p.xiii.

[219] Florence Marryat, *There is No Death*, (London: Ebenezer Baylis and Son, 1938), p.166. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text. Marryat took the title of this book from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem 'Resignation' (1850).

*Society*). The play was performed in October 1872 at the Holborn Theatre, London and Marryat's *No Intentions*, her first novel to be serialised in *London Society*, carried a dedication to her 'friend and fellow-worker, Sir Charles Lawrence Young […] in remembrance of the first representation of "Miss Chester,"' an indication of how, even at this early stage in her career, Marryat could successfully blend the roles of novelist and playwright.[220] Like George Eliot and Charlotte Yonge, Florence Marryat was poised in her career to make the move into editorship. Andrew Maunder notes that '[t]o the magazine's owner, George Bentley, Marryat's popularity […] and her reputation for hard work made her the ideal person to whom to entrust [the magazine]'.[221]

Marryat's name was conspicuous in the periodical press in the early 1870s because she had just published her father's biography and produced her first play.[222] As such, she was what Fraser, Green and Johnson call a 'showcase' editor, an editor brought in to raise the profile of a magazine, only remaining with the periodical for a short period of time.[223] As I have already suggested, Marryat's appointment was aggressively advertised. In June 1872, *The Newcastle Courant* reported that 'Mrs Ross Church (Florence Marryat) has, we hear, undertaken the editorship of *London Society*',[224] with *The Aberdeen Journal* and *The Athenaeum* publishing the same rumour.[225] Just five months into Marryat's editorship, an anonymous reviewer for the *Victoria Magazine* commented that they had 'no difficulty in tracing the results of

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[220] Florence Marryat, *No Intentions* (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1874), p.291. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text. See Kate Newey, 'Women and the Theatre', in Shattock (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain*, pp.199-200 for a discussion of *Miss Chester.*

[221] Maunder, 'Introduction', *Domestic Sensationalism*, p.xiii.

[222] See the theatre reviews in the [Anonymous], 'Drama', *Daily News* (7 October 1872), [no page number given] and [Anonymous], '"Miss Chester" at the Holborn Theatre',*The Examiner* (12 October 1872), [no page number given] for reviews of Marryat's play *Miss Chester.*

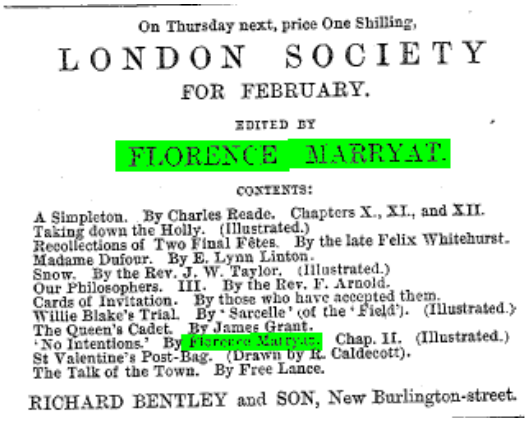
[223] Fraser, Green and Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical*, p.86.

[224] [Anonymous], 'Artistic and Literary', *The Newcastle Courant* (28 June 1872), [no page number given].

[225] [Anonymous], 'Notes on Literature, Science and Art', *The Aberdeen Journal* (3 July 1872), [no page number given].

Mrs. Ross Church's able Editorship both as regard the Stories and Illustrations'.[226] Once Marryat took over as editor, her name was always prominent in the advertisements that ran in various periodicals (see figure 1.i), confirming her status as a showcase editor.

The table below gives the contents of the February 1874 issue, which is typical of *London Society* under Marryat's editorship. The list of contributors, on the left of the table, indicates that although some articles were anonymous as in the *Westminster Review* and *The Monthly Packet*, most were named or published under a pseudonym. Male contributors in particular often included their titles, such as 'Captain Montague', or an indication of their education, such as 'Frederick



On Thursday next, price One Shilling,

LONDON SOCIETY

FOR FEBRUARY.

EDITED BY

FLORENCE MARRYAT.

CONTENTS:

A Simpleton. By Charles Reade. Chapters X., XI., and XII.
Taking down the Holly. (Illustrated.)
Recollections of Two Final Fêtes. By the late Felix Whitehurst.
Madame Dufour. By E. Lynn Linton.
Snow. By the Rev. J. W. Taylor. (Illustrated.)
Our Philosophers. III. By the Rev. F. Arnold.
Cards of Invitation. By those who have accepted them.
Willie Blake's Trial. By 'Sarcelle' (of the 'Field'). (Illustrated.)
The Queen's Cadet. By James Grant.
'No Intentions.' By Florence Marryat. Chap. II. (Illustrated.)
St Valentine's Post-Bag. (Drawn by R. Caldecott).
The Talk of the Town. By Free Lance.

RICHARD BENTLEY and SON, New Burlington-street.

**Figure 1.i 'Advertisements and Notices', *The Examiner* (21 December 1872), [no page number given].**

Weatherly, B.A.'. Unlike Eliot, who remained unnamed in the magazine throughout her period of editorship, Marryat's name was boldly printed on the contents page three times. The titles of articles, on the right of the table, indicate the topics addressed and offer a notable contrast to the contents of the *Westminster Review* and *The Monthly Packet.* Religion, history and politics are very rarely covered in Marryat's magazine. From this information it is possible to gain an insight into Marryat's working conditions as editor of *London Society*:

| | |
|---|---|
| M. E. Edwards | *Alice* [Illustration] |

[226] [Anonymous], 'Review of Books', *Victoria Magazine,* vol. 19 (October 1872), p.574.

| | |
|---|---|
| Florence Marryat, illustrated by Frank Dicksee | *No Intentions* |
| Azamut-Batuk [pseudonym of Nicolas Leon Thieblin] | Don Carlos, the Spanish Pretender |
| Unidentified | Notes on Popular Actresses: Part Two |
| H. Schütz Wilson, illustrated by Joseph Wolf | Wild Animals |
| Robin Goodfellow | A Reception in Bohemia |
| Captain Montague, illustrated by F. A. Fraser | The Penance of Adelaide Gawton |
| Harry Furniss | *St. Valentine's Day* [Illustration] |
| James Grant | A Weird Story of Bruges |
| Arthur O'Shaughnessy | Portraits Charmants: Alice |
| Frederick E. Weatherly, B. A. | *Just as of old* |
| Henry M. Dunphy | Modern Mysteries |
| Guy Roslyn, illustrated by H. Briscoe | *A Welcome* |
| Free Lance | Social Subjects |
| Unidentified | New books received |

**Figure 1.j**

Like *The Monthly Packet, London Society* has not been the subject of cataloguing or indexing, but unlike Yonge's magazine, the majority of contributions were signed. Typically for the house style of *London Society*, this number opened with an illustration by M. E. Edwards who was a regular contributor, and this was followed by the lead serial which was most often one of the editor's novels. Like *The Monthly Packet,* fiction formed a large component of *London Society* and in this number the

lead serial consisted of the concluding chapters of Marryat's sensational romance *No Intentions*. In this instalment, the heroine, who has been caring for her long-lost lover's child, is reunited with him and becomes his wife. Typically of Marryat's ironic and knowing style, this 'happy ending' is not as simple as it first appears, for the narrator wryly comments: 'Don't try to peer too closely into Irene's […] married life, lest you should be disappointed' (*No Intentions,* p.293). The other fiction for February 1874 had a suitably romantic theme: Frederick Weatherly's *Just as of Old* in which the narrator laments a long dead love and Guy Roslyn's *A Welcome* commemorates Prince Alfred's marriage to the Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna of Russia in January 1874.

Like the *Westminster Review* and *The Monthly Packet,* there was an interest in European issues in *London Society.* The *Wellesley Index* indicates that 'Azamut-Batuk' was a pseudonym used by Nicolas Leon Thieblin (1834-1889), and in the piece on 'Don Carlos, The Spanish Pretender', Thieblin describes a meeting with Don Carlos, who between 1872 and 1876 led the third and final Carlist War in Spain.[227] It was a much discussed topic in the magazines, with *Blackwood's* discussing his position in 'The Curé Santa Cruz and the Carlist War' (1873) and the *New York Times* addressing the same in 'The Spanish Pretender: Who he is and What he has Been' (May 1874). Thieblin's article showed some sympathy toward Carlos's position, and Marryat added a footnote distancing his opinion from that of the rest of the magazine: 'The Editor does not necessarily agree with the political opinions expressed in this paper'.[228] The emphasis, as in the *Westminster*, is on the contemporary. In the regular feature 'Social subjects', the anonymous contributor wrote each month about current events and gossip: in this number the issues covered included the tradition of shaking

[227] Houghton and Houghton (eds), *Wellesley Index*, vol. 5, p.873.
[228] [Florence Marryat], *London Society* (February 1874), [no volume number], [no page number given].

hands, a discussion of the laws concerning literary property, a review of William Holman Hunt's *The Shadow of Death* (which had recently been exhibited in London) and a wry look at St. Valentine's Day.

'A Reception in Bohemia' playfully toys with the scandalous reputation of 'the people of Bohemia', describing the 'at home' of a widow and her daughter who are 'well known to literature'.[229] The anonymous contributor describes this society in terms of a house, through which he guides his reader, implied as male, for after the evening meal, the 'ladies' retire and the narrator comments that 'we find ourselves – you and I, my friend, in a snug cover of the room below, sitting with the host, and smoking a parting cigar' ('A Reception', p.140). Addressing readers directly, the narrator entices them with the 'gossip' of 'our writers and entertainers', asking: 'Confess, my dear lady, you who read the magazines down in the country, do you not enjoy this kind of everyday chat?' ('A Reception', p.140). Different members of London's literary society are introduced and gently mocked, including a female novelist, a male poet, a journalist, an actress, and 'Mrs Rossington', a reference to Marryat, who is described as 'a novelist, the editress of the leading illustrated magazine [whose] novels are even more popular in America than on this side of the water' ('A Reception', p.133).

One contemporary issue that was repeatedly covered under Marryat's editorship was spiritualism, and Henry M. Dunphy's 'Modern Mysteries', which I discuss in Chapter Three, argued for the veracity of certain high-profile spirit mediums who were then being investigated for fraud. Dunphy's article was supported within the magazine by 'A Weird Story of Bruges' in which the narrator is the victim of a malicious mesmeriser who orders him to kill his own uncle. Typical of *London*

[229] [Anonymous], 'A Reception in Bohemia', *London Society*, vol. 25 (February 1874), p.136. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

*Society*'s content even before the advent of a female editor, articles such as the anonymous 'Notes on Popular Actresses', focused on women and women's behaviour. The popular actresses discussed included Mrs Clara Rousby (who appeared alongside her husband in London in *King Lear, Mary Queen of Scots* and an adaptation of M. E. Braddon's *Griselda*[230]), Mrs John Wood and Matilda Charlotte Vining (who appeared in *The American Lady* and *the Merry Wives of Windsor*).[231]

Like *The Monthly Packet, London Society* often concluded with a review of 'New Books Received', and the books under review for this number included Elizabeth Eiloart's *Lady Moretoun's Daughter* (1873) and Stephen MacKenna's *At School with an Old Dragoon* (1874). As with the reviews in Yonge's magazine, new novels often received severe criticism: 'In "Lady Moretoun's Daughter,"' the anonymous reviewer wrote, 'Mrs. Eiloart has spoilt an interesting plot for want of a knowledge of dramatic art'.[232] H. Schütz Wilson gives Daniel Giraud Elliot's *The Life and Habits of Wild Animals* (1874) a longer and more positive review, reproducing an illustration from that book of a leopard by the wildlife artist Joseph Wolf.

*The Westminster Review*, *The Monthly Packet*, *The Barnacle* and *London Society* were, clearly, very different magazines attracting very different readerships, and this fact is reflected in the careers of the women who edited them. Despite their obvious differences, however, the experience of editing helped to shape the career of each, whether it served as a springboard into a hugely successful career as a novelist, as for Eliot, or as a route into other professions such as public speaking and acting, as for Marryat, or as a stable career that provided a regular role and source of income for

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[230] Joseph Knight, 'Rousby , Clara Marion Jessie (1848–1879)', rev. J. Gilliland, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24176, accessed 5 May 2009].
[231] C. M. P. Taylor, 'Wood , Matilda Charlotte (*bap.* 1831, *d.* 1915)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/51461, accessed 5 May 2009].
[232] [Anonymous], 'New Books Received', *London Society*, vol. 25 (February 1874), p.188.

nearly a lifetime, as for Yonge. Whatever purpose the role of editor served, for each woman her time as a journalist and editor shaped her evolving professional identity, and in the chapters that follow, I explore how this experience was then reflected in the fiction that each woman wrote. It is to George Eliot's construction of an editorial persona, her adaptation to the demands of journalism, and then her later fiction, that I now turn.

## Chapter One: George Eliot

> Never for one instant did she forget her self-created Self […]. She was so consciously 'George Eliot'.[1]

Eliza Lynn Linton's reflections in *My Literary Life* are familiar to Eliot scholars, and with good reason, for Linton's remarks suggest that 'George Eliot' was a distinct public persona that Marian Evans consciously performed. Writing about Eliot's Sunday afternoon 'at homes' at the Priory, Nina Auerbach suggests that Eliot had a 'hunger for self-dramatization', and took pleasure in playing the roles of 'artist and sibyl'.[2] But this role playing was not limited to Eliot's later career; Deirdre David has described the whole of her 'career [as] a narrative of self-creation'.[3] 'George Eliot' was not, of course, created until 1859, when Marian Evans published her first fiction under that pseudonym. As Rosemarie Bodenheimer comments: '[t]he play between '"Mary Ann/Marian Evans/Lewes" and "George Eliot", must concern everyone who writes about this woman and artist of many names, not least when it comes to making decisions about what to call her'.[4] It is significant that Bodenheimer makes a distinction between 'the woman' (the personal) and the 'artist of many names' (the professional) for this division reflects one of the central concerns in Eliot's fiction, namely, how the female artist struggled to reconcile her limited sphere as a woman with her desire to fulfil a vocation professionally, something that I consider in detail in the second part of this chapter.[5]

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[1] Eliza Lynn Linton, *My Literary Life: Reminiscences of Dickens, Thackeray and George Eliot* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1899), p.99.
[2] Nina Auerbach, 'Secret Performances: George Eliot and the Art of Acting', *Romantic Imprisonment: Women and Other Glorified Outcasts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp.253-267.
[3] David, *Intellectual Women*, p.163.
[4] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Real Life of Mary Ann Evans: George Eliot Her Letters and Fiction* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), p.xvii.
[5] Bodenheimer, *The Real Life of Mary Ann Evans*, p.xvii.

In her review of Eliot scholarship at the turn of the twenty-first century, Alicia Carroll notes how, for most critics, Eliot's 'creative life seems divided into two distinct periods: the years of translation and periodical writing and editing followed by the years of novel writing'.[6] As such, critics generally refer to 'Marian Evans' when discussing her early journalism and editorship of the *Westminster Review*. 'Marian Evans' is, therefore, distinctly identified as the journalist, the frustrated author, and the private woman. However, when it comes to the publication of her first fiction in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, and the major novels such as *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), *Middlemarch* (1871-1872) and *Daniel Deronda* (1876), she is always referred to by her pseudonym. Indeed, Eliot's choice to retain her pseudonym even when her identity had been revealed encouraged this distinction between the private and public selves during her own lifetime; it encouraged an awareness of the 'self-created Self' that Eliza Lynn Linton commented upon. It also meant that by the time Eliot penned her final novel, 'Marian Evans' had been thoroughly buried under the dominant professional identity of 'George Eliot'. The act of taking the married name 'Mrs J. W. Cross' in 1880 may have appeased her brother Isaac, but it did not impinge on the established persona of 'George Eliot'. Indeed, she had already used the title of 'Mrs' after moving in with Lewes. My choice is to refer to 'George Eliot', and so recognise the division that the author herself created, while also reflecting my interest in the process of negotiation that resulted in the 'self-created Self'.

The sheer number of titles which Eliot attached to herself indicates her awareness and understanding of 'the powerful and assertive act of self-naming' in the

[6] Alicia Carroll, 'Vocation and Production: Recent George Eliot Studies', *Dickens Studies Annual*, vol. 28 (1999), p.230.

construction of a public identity.[7] As she moved between personal and professional roles, working toward the position of novelist, the names Eliot fashioned for herself reflected her developing, shifting, and almost always ambiguous, identity as a writer. Thus Mary Ann Evans, the teenage carer of her father, transformed herself into Marian Evans the journalist, to Marian Lewes the essayist and 'mistress' of George Henry Lewes, to George Eliot the novelist and finally to Mrs J. W. Cross, literary sage, eminent Victorian and a married woman. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that this constant reinvention of the self 'reflect[s] some of the anxiety' that Eliot felt about her professional role, an anxiety which compelled her to continually 'juggle' her names.[8] Alexis Easley, however, has since suggested that:

> [t]hroughout her career, Eliot used anonymity and pseudonymity to distance her identity from her work. By creating 'George Eliot' as an intermediary persona between herself and her readers, Eliot was able to resist being defined according to cultural stereotypes of feminine writing.[9]

So, adopting a male pseudonym enabled Eliot to define herself as a professional through 'a model of authorship that [was] premised on culture rather than on notions of essential femininity'.[10] Ironically, therefore, Eliot was able to sidestep the 'stereotypes of feminine writing' that she herself had in many ways helped to perpetuate when writing under the cover of anonymity (and assumed masculinity) in essays such as 'Silly Novels by Lady Novelists'.

In the first section of this chapter, I trace Eliot's negotiation of a public identity through her first professional roles of editor and contributor to the *Westminster Review* between 1852 and 1856. We saw in the Introduction that Eliot's journalism is an area still ripe for further research; in the late 1840s, she published a

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[7] Teresa Mangum, 'George Eliot and the Journalists: Making the Mistress Moral', in Kristine Garrigan (ed.), *Victorian Scandals: Representations of Gender and Class* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992), pp.176-177.
[8] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p.452.
[9] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, p.117.
[10] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, p.118.

number of pieces in the *Coventry Herald*, and in the 1850s she contributed not only to the *Westminster*, but also to the *Saturday Review*, the *Leader* (at times writing on Lewes's behalf when he was ill), the *Fortnightly Review*, and the *Pall Mall Gazette* during the 1860s.[11] This journalism, particularly the *Pall Mall Gazette* essays, offers a fascinating area for future research, however my interest is in Eliot's publications in the journal she edited, and what they reveal about her emerging professional identity.

Eliot's most significant essays on women's literary professionalism were published in the *Westminster Review*, and in the first half of this chapter I examine 'Silly Novels by Lady Novelists' in particular in order to suggest that through her journalism, Eliot described an ideal of professionalism (something that Susan Colón has called Eliot's 'professional construct'[12]) which combined what she saw as 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits.[13] As authorship did not offer a period of official training in the way that many other professions did (such as the law or medicine), it was Eliot's journalism which served as her apprenticeship, for during this time she learnt the mechanics of the publishing industry and the skill of perfecting her writing through what she would later describe as 'severe effort' (*GEL*: IV: 300). The importance of 'severe effort' and training is reflected in Eliot's ideal of professionalism as described in her journalism, and later in her fiction. At the heart of this ideal is a tension between self-interest (ambition, egoism, and vanity) and public interest (morality, empathy, and emotion). What Eliot's journalism and fiction reveal is an attempt to reconcile this tension by presenting the artist as involved in what

[11] For more on the *Pall Mall Gazette* essays, see Kathleen McKormack, 'The Saccharissa Essays: George Eliot's Only Woman Persona', *Nineteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 4 (1990), pp.41-59 and Hilda Hollis, 'The Nibbling Mouse: Eliot's Saccharissa Letters in the Context of Bodichon's Call for Political Engagement', *Nineteenth-Century Prose*, vol. 27, no. 1 (2000), pp.49-59.
[12] Susan E. Colón, '"One Function in Particular": Professionalism and Specialization in *Daniel Deronda*, *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 37, no. 3 (Fall 2005), p.295.
[13] [George Eliot], 'Belles Lettres', *The Westminster Review*, vol. 67, no. 131 (January 1857), p.306.

Patricia Zakreski has suggested 'refining' work compatible with domestic ideology, and therefore distanced from the degrading association with trade.[14]

As Alexis Easley has pointed out, Eliot 'justified' her participation in the public debate on the woman writer, and then later her position as a high culture novelist, 'on the basis of her role in improving middle-class self-culture and literary taste'.[15] So, by aligning herself with high art, Eliot positioned herself as involved in a kind of spiritual or moral relationship with her readers, drawing the emphasis away from the fact that she was selling her writing for money. It was those women writers who facilitated this relationship through their art, who enhanced self-culture by developing taste in themselves and their readers, whom Eliot celebrated in 'Silly Novels'. The writers she denigrated were those whom she thought were exploiting their artistic vocation merely for financial gain, writing for the 'popular' market and for 'novel readers', or as an opportunity to indulge in self-display and vanity (*GEL*: III: 302).[16] Having described her ideal of women's authorship in 'Silly Novels', Eliot then repeatedly returned to the difficulty of reconciling art as refining work with the necessity of selling that work, of public display, in her fictional representations of the female artist-professional, upon which the second half of this chapter focuses. Eliot was reasonably comfortable with the notion of performance and furthermore, recognised the importance of a convincing act for the professional.

In Chapters Two and Three, I explore how Eliot's concept of professionalism was only practicable for authors like herself who wrote for the high culture market, however, in this chapter I compare Eliot's notion of women's literary professionalism with that of Charlotte Yonge and Florence Marryat, in order to demonstrate that

[14] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.8.
[15] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, p.117.
[16] For more on popular or low art and high culture, see Andrea Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture and Postmodernism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986).

although these three editors were writing for very different markets, the concepts upon which they based their ideal of women's authorship were in fact very similar. As I mentioned in the Introduction, Eliot, Yonge and Marryat shared the ideals of hard work, training and excellence, and their fiction reflects an emphasis on the artist-professional enhancing self-culture. However, as single women who supported large families, Yonge (who never married but nevertheless helped to support her sibling) and Marryat (who was divorced by her first husband and separated from her second) were often not able to practise the ideals of high art that they described in their fiction, for they were normally writing at speed for money. After the success of *Adam Bede* (1859), Eliot was able to live something of a 'masculine model of the writing life', being 'kept by Lewes' in the 'mental greenhouse' that Margaret Oliphant described so enviously.[17] As Joanne Shattock has noted, part of the disillusionment with Eliot as a role model for other women writers in the early twentieth century stemmed from a recognition of how unachievable her working conditions were (once she was an established author) for most other women writers.[18]

In the second part of this chapter, I explore Eliot's fictional representations of the female artist-professional in relation to the ideals she had described in her journalism and her own negotiation of a public persona. I begin by examining the singer Caterina Sarti in the second of Eliot's trilogy of short stories, 'Mr Gilfil's Love-Story' (1857), which together with 'The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton' and 'Janet's Repentance' made up *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1858). Like so many of the heroines that followed her, Caterina is silenced but finds spiritual relief through her art. As such, her performances are represented as refining both for her and her audience; ultimately, however, Caterina falls into the trap of vanity. I compare

[17] Jay (ed.), *The Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant*, p.50.
[18] Joanne Shattock, 'The Construction of the Women Writer', in Shattock (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain*, p.29.

Caterina to the heroine of Margaret Oliphant's *The Three Athelings* (1857), Agnes Atheling, who is an aspiring author. Oliphant's novel was serialised for some months alongside 'Mr Gilfil's Love-Story' in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and both texts focus on a young woman artist: a singer in Eliot's story and an author in Oliphant's novel. Caterina sings in private and does not get paid, yet she has some of the qualities of the professional for she receives training and her performances enhance self-culture. Agnes publishes her work, gets paid, and goes through a period of apprenticeship in which she learns from the mistakes of her first publication (a popular but sensational novel) in order to build her career upon writing more serious literature.

Linda Lewis has rightly pointed out that nearly every heroine in the Eliot canon struggles to make her voice heard: the singer Caterina is 'silenced in death', the preacher Dinah Morris is silenced in marriage, Maggie Tulliver is drowned 'before she achieves her true voice', Romola is stopped at the city gates, Dorothea Brooke fails to make her mark on the world, Armgart is another silenced singer, Mirah Lapidoth 'has a beautiful voice but no great ambition', Gwendolen Harleth has ambition but not the beautiful voice, and finally, the opera singer Leonora Halm-Eberstein's career on stage, and fierce ambition, seem to break her health.[19] Though characters who seek non-artistic vocations are of interest (particularly Dinah Morris, Maggie Tulliver, and Dorothea Brooke),[20] I have concentrated on the figure of the actress and singer in *Armgart* (1874) and *Daniel Deronda* because very often Eliot used this vocation to explore her own concerns about public performance. As Patricia Zakreski has noted, the figure of the performer was particularly difficult to reconcile

[19] Lewis, *Germaine de Staël, George Eliot, and the Victorian Woman Artist*, p.137.
[20] For more on artistic vocation in *Romola* and *Middlemarch* in particular, see Susan M. Greenstein, 'The Question of Vocation: From *Romola* to *Middlemarch*', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, vol. 35 (1981), pp.487-505.

with the notion of suitable work for women because the actress and singer did not always work at home and did not produce a tangible or useful product.[21] More than any other professional, then, the female performer suggests self-display that is sexualised.

Mirah Lapidoth in *Daniel Deronda*, like Caterina in 'Mr Gilfil', performs in a domestic space (the drawing-room), but unlike Caterina, Mirah performs for money. This she shares with Armgart and Daniel Deronda's mother, Leonora who both enjoy long singing careers but lose their voices at the height of their success. In *Armgart* and *Daniel Deronda* open ambition, vanity and a sustained presence on the public stage are presented as morally dangerous and damaging to women. Alison Byerly suggests that for Eliot, 'theatrical art is linked with a dangerous deception of self and others', and as such Eliot's performers often suffer from 'indulging in egoistic self-dramatization'.[22] It is only Mirah, a performer who swaps the stage for the drawing room, who achieves a compromise between self-culture and self-display; as Auerbach has put it, she manages to combine 'sincerity' with 'compelling display'.[23]

That Eliot saw performance as a necessary part of professionalism does not mean that she was consistently suspicious of it. Indeed, Eliot's journalism and fiction suggest that she recognised the need for performance to be 'compelling'. *Daniel Deronda* in particular might be fruitfully read as being influenced by the genre of women's theatrical novels of the 1870s that Sarah Bilston has recently discussed. Bilston suggests that in these novels, the stage is presented as a 'noble and ennobling profession', which depends on women's 'power of endurance and self-sacrifice'.[24] As Zakreski has noted, while attempts had been made throughout the nineteenth century

[21] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.138.
[22] Alison Byerly, *Realism, Representation, and the Arts in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.107.
[23] Auerbach, 'Secret Performances', pp.260-262.
[24] Sarah Bilston, 'Authentic Performance in Theatrical Women's Fiction of the 1870s', p.39.

to 'represent acting as one of the higher arts', it was only in the 1870s and 1880s that its 'artistic reputation grew', through books such as George Henry Lewes's *On Actors and the Art of Acting* (1875). In theatre novels, acting is raised above the traditional association of sexual display and promiscuity to the realm of high art through the depiction of the actress as experiencing 'a lengthy and arduous routine of study, rehearsing, costuming, and acting', values which are very similar to those described in Eliot's notion of professionalism.[25] Eliot's representation of the stage as an ennobling profession for women was not as forthright as Florence Marryat's, but in *Daniel Deronda,* Mirah's performances are represented as 'refining' for both Mirah and her audience because they require hard work and sacrifice, qualities that were highly compatible with the constructions of femininity and domesticity.[26] Eliot understood the importance of a convincing performance because of her own experience of negotiating a public identity: she knew that in order to be successful, a woman must act her part well. As we have seen in the Introduction, the *Westminster Review* was a journal in which issues of gender were ever-present, and it was within this context that Eliot began the process of constructing a persona in earnest through her first professional editorship, for as Fraser, Green and Johnston have noted, the periodical press afforded women like Eliot a 'liminal space between the public and private domains' in which concepts of gender and professionalism could be complicated.[27] It is to this period of Eliot's career that I now turn.

**The Character of Editress**

In the Introduction I described how Eliot came to be editor of the *Westminster Review*, and how little evidence there is of what she actually did while in post. The 'virtual invisibility of her role' between 1852 and 1854 was no doubt useful for Eliot,

[25] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.17.
[26] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.17.
[27] Fraser, Green and Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical*, p.5.

but it presents a problem for those researching her early career: how can we comment on the development of a writer's professional identity when the very nature of that identity initially relied so heavily on invisibility?[28] We have already seen that Eliot suggested to John Chapman that her editorship should remain a secret in order to encourage the perception that he was the principal editor. Fionnuala Dillane argues that a picture of 'Eliot's professionalism emerges in the actual form the *Westminster Review* takes from 1852-54', and indeed the changes she made to the magazine during this time certainly provide an indication of Eliot's contribution.[29] However, analysis based on the construction of the journal alone relies heavily on conjecture and, as Dillane acknowledges, by necessity such analysis must focus largely on the 'non-literary' aspects of the periodical.[30]

Though Dillane's research is extremely helpful in bridging the gap in our knowledge of what Eliot may have achieved in the *Westminster*, such analysis of the actual form of the journal itself can offer only limited clues about the editor's negotiation of her emerging persona. We can glean a clearer insight into this process through Eliot's correspondence at this time, and from her journalism, written just after she ceased to act as editor. Rosemarie Bodenheimer's biography has drawn attention to Eliot's 'playful, literary notion of the letter as a representative of the self, rather than an expression or a confession'.[31] So letter writing was, for Eliot, another form of performance, and it is largely through her letters that she constructed and represented her first professional persona, the 'character of Editress'. In a letter of 1853, written some two years after she took up her post, Eliot implored a friend to keep secret her position at the *Westminster*: 'never mention me', she wrote, 'in character of Editress'

[28] Bodenheimer, *The Real Life of Mary Ann Evans*, p.168.
[29] Dillane, 'Before George Eliot', p.52.
[30] Dillane, 'Before George Eliot', p.52.
[31] Bodenheimer, *The Real Life of Mary Ann Evans*, p.xiv.

(*GEL*: II: 85). Though it is a term she used just once, Dillane argues that the 'character of Editress' was in fact a distinct 'editorial character' which 'emerges in correspondence associated with the *Review*'.[32] This 'editorial character' did not 'emerge' in the more obvious spaces of an editorial preface or in notes published in the *Westminster Review* itself for the nominal editor John Chapman relied upon the implication that he was the principal editor of the *Westminster*, and Eliot's invisibility in the journal itself was crucial in achieving this illusion.

In their discussion of what has been termed the 'critical double standard', Gilbert and Gubar note that:

> Victorian critics strained their ingenuity for terms that would put delicate emphasis on the specialness of women and avoid the professional neutrality of 'woman writer': authoress, female pen, lady novelist, and […] 'lady fictionists.'[33]

'Editress' can certainly be added to this list.[34] As Gilbert and Gubar suggest, the feminisation of such titles in no small measure served to belittle the professional nature of many literary women's careers by reminding the reader of the woman writer's difference or 'specialness' in a male-dominated profession. So, within the patriarchal conception of woman as 'other', the 'norm' of the male editor became feminised and 'othered' through terms like the 'editress'; the author became the authoress, the novelist became the lady novelist.

Yet, as Mary Poovey has demonstrated, the femininity and domesticity implied through these terms could be used to the advantage of the middle-class woman seeking to create an identity for herself. Certainly, the 'difference' of the literary woman is something that Charlotte Yonge and Florence Marryat benefited

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[32] Dillane, 'Before George Eliot', p.56.
[33] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p.74.
[34] For discussion of the 'editress' and 'lady-editor' prior to the period of my thesis, see Alison Adburgham, *Women in Print: Writing Women and Women's Magazine from the Restoration to the Accession of Victoria* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1972) and Terence Allan Hoagwood and Kathryn Ledbetter, *"Colour'd Shadows" Contexts in Publishing, Printing, and Reading Nineteenth-Century Women Writers* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

from, for both linked their personas as editors to feminised characters (that of Mother Goose and the spiritualist editress), often through illustrations in which they were depicted as empowered. For these two women, operating in the popular fiction market, femininity was positive in a way that it was not for George Eliot, editing an intellectual magazine and writing highbrow novels. As I mentioned in the Introduction, Marryat styled herself as the colourful and bold 'editress' of *London Society*. Yet, whereas Marryat's persona was empowered in the illustrations of her magazine, Eliot tended to use the persona in correspondence to detract from her authority when she needed to, rather than to playfully exaggerate it as Marryat did. Yet, Eliot occasionally styled herself in her letters as femininised in her first professional role, illustrating that even for her, femininity and domesticity were appealing at this specific point in her career. Eliot's ambivalence toward her first professional role complicates our understanding of her public persona, which is so often associated with the male pseudonym that she adopted for her fiction writing.

The letters Eliot wrote when she was editing show her fashioning the 'character of Editress' as a distinct persona, based upon the values of dedication and hard work, characteristics which she would later describe as 'accurate thought, severe study, and continuous self-command'.[35] In her discussion of vocation in *Daniel Deronda*, Susan Colón suggests that Eliot's model of professionalism balances self-interestedness (egoism) and selflessness (altruism), and that 'suffering' is a key element in achieving this balance.[36] But what Eliot's correspondence shows is not so much an emphasis on 'suffering', but on what she called 'severe effort', hard work, research, and dedication (*GEL*: IV: 300). Pauline Nestor has argued that Eliot had a 'deep suspicion of female ambition', but her pride in her work can be read as

[35] [George Eliot], 'Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Dred*, Charles Reade's *It is Never Too Late to Mend*, and Frederika Bremner's *Hertha*', in Byatt (ed.), *George Eliot: Selected Essays*, p.387.
[36] Susan E. Colón, '"One Function in Particular"', p.298.

challenging this view.[37] For example, Eliot wrote in one letter that '[o]n Saturday I was correcting proofs literally from morning till night – yesterday ditto – so I have been unable to earn my week's penny-worth' (*GEL*: II: 92). In another letter, she wrote: 'My table is covered with books – all to be digested by the editorial maw – I foresee terribly hard work for the next weeks' (*GEL*: I: 371).

So, Eliot did not hide her ambitions for the *Westminster*; she represented herself as agonising over each number for which she was responsible, constantly pushing herself and her contributors to produce the best product on the market: 'I have been ready to tear my hair with disappointment about the next number', she complained to Charles Bray in March 1853, 'The English Contemporary Literature is worse than ever and the article on Ruth and Villette is unsatisfactory. Then one of the articles is half as long again as it ought to be. In short I am a miserable Editor' (*GEL*: II: 93). This passage emphasises the sole responsibility that Eliot felt for each number, but also her ambition that each number under her care should be the best that it could be; the 'character of Editress' here emerges as built upon a combination of Eliot's hard work and her sense of public service to the readers of the *Westminster Review*. While she emphasised her dedication, she also took pride in the results of her hard work. She was not shy in stressing to friends the continuation under her editorship of the high quality articles and intellectual tone traditionally associated with the prestigious *Westminster*: 'On the whole our number is very superior even in attractiveness to either the Edinburgh or the Quarterly' (*GEL*: II: 6).

As well as using the 'editress' to emphasise her dedication, this persona was also used to placate difficult contributors, for the 'official feminine subordination'

[37] Pauline Nestor, *George Eliot* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p.21.

implied by feminising her role 'could […] prove positively useful'.[38] This was particularly the case when Eliot wanted to deflect attention away from her decision-making powers. Eliot had told George Combe that Thomas Huxley was employed in writing the 'scientific department of the Contemporary Literature' section; Combe then forwarded Eliot some 'testimonials' in favour of a recent medical pamphlet. Eliot was nervous that Combe should send the testimonials through her, in case Huxley 'allege against me that my having communicated the fact of his being engaged to write on a certain subject had drawn upon him unsought correspondence, however valuable in my opinion such correspondence may be'. She wrote:

> If I were the sole editor of the Westminster, I would take the responsibility on to myself, and ask you to send them through me, but being a woman and something less than half an editor, I do not see how the step you propose could be taken with the naturalness and *biensénce* that could alone favour any good result (*GEL*: VIII: 90).

Although Eliot presented herself to Combe as having little power overall, she was in charge of the day-to-day running of the magazine; in this letter, Eliot can be seen to be 'tactfully stroking' Combe's ego in order to 'shore up his wavering support for the *Review*'.[39] The result of this correspondence was, however, that Combe sent the testimonials to her anyway, so that she could send them 'in other directions'. In another letter, Eliot described to a friend a meeting she had with Mackay: 'I have been using my powers of eloquence and flattering this morning to make him begin an article on the Development of Protestantism. He says "Thank you" and asks me what books I recommend him to read!' (*GEL*: I: 367). Despite expressing surprise at her own success, Eliot was clearly aware of the effect of flattery upon her male contributors when in the 'character of Editress'.

[38] Bodenheimer, *The Real Life of Mary Ann Evans*, p.168.
[39] Bodenheimer, *The Real Life of Mary Ann Evans*, p.168.

While at times, Eliot seemed to use this persona flirtatiously, like Florence Marryat, it also resembled the comically formidable and occasionally violent figure evident in the illustrations of Charlotte Yonge as Mother Goose, which I discuss in Chapter Two. Writing to Sara Hennell in October 1852, for example, Eliot described herself as 'stamping with rage – nay swearing' after correcting a proof that she had already spent time correcting. She went on to fantasise: 'I should like to stick red hot skewers through the writer whose style is as sprawling as [W. R. Greg's] handwriting' (*GEL*: II: 93). Passages such as this suggest that Eliot not only worked hard at correcting her contributors' proofs, but relished having fun at their expense. So, to suggest that Eliot employed her editorial persona consistently, and that it was always the same, would be misleading; as we have seen, the 'editress' could be flirtatious when it suited her purposes, as when attempting to placate difficult contributors or entice new ones, yet at other times the 'editress' was comically aggressive and violent, venting her professional frustrations with her tongue firmly in her cheek. In 1854, Eliot left the post of editor after a disagreement with Chapman over his handling of the *Westminster*'s finances, and in doing so she left editorship behind her.[40] When she returned to London after her trip abroad with Lewes, Eliot adapted her persona to suit her new focus on writing journalism, rather than editing it.

In what has been called her 'belleletrist phase' (the period between 1854 and 1857 in which Eliot wrote some of her most important essays and reviews), Beryl Gray has suggested that Eliot's professional identity noticeably evolved so that it resembled the narrative voice that she would later adopt in her novels.[41] This journalistic persona was authoritative, confident and did not closely resemble the comically aggressive or placating character that Eliot had adopted for editorship.

[40] For more on the altercation between Eliot and Chapman toward the end of her editorship see Ashton, *142 Strand*, pp.187-200.
[41] Gray, 'George Eliot and the *Westminster Review*', p.222.

Dillane has argued that 'this new disguise was […] part of a planned professional strategy to protect [Eliot's] career in the periodical press', for although she published the majority of her journalism in the progressive *Westminster Review*, she still needed the protection that this journal's policy of anonymity afforded her.[42] Donald Gray has argued that during this period of Eliot's career she developed the 'regimen of a professional literary journalist', and indeed as I have mentioned, Eliot did begin to widen her scope to include other journals at this time.[43] Judith Johnston and Hilary Fraser have identified 'Silly Novels', published in the *Westminster* in 1856, as highly significant because it was published 'at the very moment when women's writing [was] beginning to be considered seriously as professional writing'.[44] What this meant for Eliot's own developing sense of professional identity is the question I now explore in detail.

**'Silly Novels by Lady Novelists'**

Eliot published some of her most important essays on art and authorship in the late 1850s. I mentioned earlier that Eliot's ideal of professionalism was based upon a combination of what she saw to be masculine and feminine styles of authorship. She described this ideal most clearly in her review of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, which she published in the *Westminster* just months after 'Silly Novels'. She wrote that:

> Mrs Browning is, perhaps, the first woman who has produced a work […] which superadds to masculine vigor, breadth, and culture, feminine subtlety of perception, feminine quickness of sensibility, and feminine tenderness. […] [I]n this, her longest and greatest poem, Mrs Browning has shown herself all the greater poet because she is intensely a poetess.[45]

For Eliot, the best women's writing demonstrated 'subtlety of perception', 'quickness of sensibility' and 'tenderness'; great men's writing offered 'vigor', breadth', and of

[42] Dillane, 'Before George Eliot', p.160.
[43] Gray, 'George Eliot and her Publishers', p.184.
[44] Johnston and Fraser, 'The Professionalization of Women's Writing', p.231.
[45] [Eliot], 'Belles Lettres', p.306.

course, 'culture'. But, as Charles LaPorte has pointed out, what Eliot admired about Barrett Browning was that she managed to combine the two, to 'superadd' the feminine to the masculine.[46] Indeed, Eliot suggested in this review that the exceptional woman writer could 'appropriate' the 'cultural weight of a supposedly male tradition' without losing what was special about the female.[47] Eliot's model of women's literary professionalism, based upon a careful balance between valuing the feminine whilst appropriating the masculine, was particularly unhelpful to authors such as Charlotte Yonge and Florence Marryat who were not easily able to access intellectual and 'cultured' circles as Eliot was able to do. Marryat in particular was unable to spend time researching for her fiction.

Before Eliot wrote specifically about women's literary professionalism in 'Silly Novels', she had broached the subject in 'Woman in France: Madame de Sablé' (1854). This article, published some two years before 'Silly Novels', was written with a male narrative voice, for Eliot employed the 'editorial we' of 'higher journalism' that was so often presumed to be male.[48] The narrator 'invite[s] our friends that we may thrust a book into their hands, and presuppose an exclusive desire in the "ladies" to discuss their own matters, "that we may crackle the *Times*" at our ease.'[49] Referring to the 'ladies' in this way serves to place both the narrator and the reader firmly within the public (male) sphere: woman is 'othered' here. From this position, the narrator lampoons 'feminine literature':

> With a few remarkable exceptions, our own feminine literature [as opposed to that of French women writers] is made up of books which could have been better written by men […] when not a feeble imitation, they are usually an

[46] Charles LaPorte, 'George Eliot, The Poetess as Prophet', *Victorian Literature and Culture* (2003), p.160.
[47] LaPorte, 'George Eliot, The Poetess as Prophet', p.161.
[48] Easley, 'Authorship, Gender and Identity', p.148.
[49] [George Eliot], 'Woman in France: Madame de Sablé', in Byatt (ed.), *George Eliot: Selected Essays*, p.16. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

> absurd exaggeration of the masculine style, like the swaggering gait of a bad actress in male attire ('Woman in France', p.8).

The image of the 'swaggering gait of a bad actress' is intriguing, for had the author's gender been known at the time of publication, this is exactly the accusation that would have been levelled at Eliot herself. In the very act of writing this essay with the adopted voice of the male critic (the 'editorial we' as Easley puts it), Eliot became a 'literary actress', dressing her essay up in the attire of male critical discourse, mimicking the 'masculine style'. The paradox of Eliot's position is evident because, as Christine Krueger suggests, in her early journalism she 'clearly prided herself on her successful male ventriloquism,' yet when she came to write fiction, 'she frequently betrayed a longing for the female preacher's moral authority and rhetorical power *as a woman*'.[50]

Importantly, however, this passage suggests that it is not the performance itself that Eliot objected to, but the poor quality of that performance. As Sherri Catherine Smith has suggested, 'Eliot's discrimination between the mimicry of other women and her own intellectual cross-dressing derives from her assessment of the quality of the performance'.[51] Her praise of Barrett Browning reveals her belief that the mistake women were making was to mimic the 'masculine style' without adding what was special about the feminine. Without the feminine, which serves to refine the performance, the woman is reduced to male impersonation. In other words, the difference as Eliot saw it was that the professional woman knew the importance of performing her part well.

In 'Woman in France', Eliot identified Madame de Sablé's historical and social conditions as in many respects more liberating than those of the nineteenth-

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[50] Christine L. Krueger, *The Reader's Repentance: Women Preachers, Women Writers, and Nineteenth-Century Discourse* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), p.240.
[51] Smith, 'George Eliot, Straight Drag and the Masculine Investments of Feminism', p.102.

century, a circumstance which enabled French women to produce the kind of high quality literature that Eliot admired:

> [t]heir minds [were] uncramped by timidity, and unstrained by mistaken effort. They were not trying to make a career for themselves; they thought little, in many cases not at all, of the public; they wrote letters to their lovers and friends, memoirs of their every-day lives, romances in which they gave portraits of their familiar acquaintances, and described the tragedy or comedy which was going on before their eyes […]. They wrote what they saw, thought, and felt […] without any intention to prove that women could write as well as men, without affecting manly views or suppressing womanly ones ('Woman in France', p.9).

Again, what is emphasised in this passage is the mistake of 'affecting' the masculine while 'suppressing' the feminine. It is also interesting to note that ambition is condemned; these women achieved literary distinction because they were 'not trying to make a career for themselves'. Equally, self-display is admonished; they 'thought little', and in many cases 'not at all, of the public'. However, the women of seventeenth-century France did not, according to Eliot, feign 'timidity' either; they simply wrote from their own observations or history, just as Eliot would go on to do in her first piece of fiction, 'Amos Barton', which recalled her childhood in the rural Midlands.

In arguing that women like Madame de Sablé had certain freedoms which allowed her to observe the 'tragedy or comedy' around her, and therefore to write high quality fiction, Eliot controversially suggested that one such freedom was from the marital bond. Liberated from the constraints of the restrictive social etiquette that surrounded the married woman, women like Madame de Sablé were able to attend *salons*, a space which Eliot identified as ideal for intelligent women seeking to learn and influence, a space where:

> conversation ran along the whole gamut of subjects, from the frothiest *vers de société* to the philosophy of Descartes […] a rendezvous for different circles of people, bent on entertaining themselves either by showing talent or admiring it […] in such a circle women would not become *bas bleus* or

> dreamy moralizers, ignorant of the world and of human nature, but intelligent observers of character and events. ('Woman in France', pp.12-14)

The description in this passage of women at the centre of intellectual debate highlights the importance of access to culture: if the woman writer was able to develop her skills of observing human nature and events through her observations, then she would be able to reflect that in her fiction, drawing her away from the trappings of the 'dreamy moralizer'. Clearly, the married woman or the mother has no place in this model.

Having touched upon the social and historical circumstances which she thought engendered high art in Europe, Eliot went on in 'Silly Novels' to consider the current state of women's writing in nineteenth century Britain. Alexis Easley has pointed out that in 'Silly Novels', 'Eliot criticize[d] women's novels in order to make an argument for more cultured models of women's authorship',[52] for when 'Silly Novels' was published, the concept of 'cultured authorship' was increasingly being defined as masculine as the novel became a more respected genre. So, while Easley suggests that Eliot attempted to neutralise gendered definitions of culture in her essay, it is important to note that 'culture' was not a gender-neutral concept in 1856. As Tuchman and Fortin point out, by the time Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) was published, it articulated ideas about high culture being a male domain that were 'already entrenched'.[53] Discussing Eliot's thoughts on Dutch realism, Alison Booth captures the complexity of Eliot's position:

> Eliot's espousal of Dutch realism was not only an acceptance of what Lewes and others had set aside as woman's sphere in art (women excel in domestic detail), but also a challenge to the history (and art history) that devalued commonplace detail, the feminine, and Dutch realism together'.[54]

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[52] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, p.118.
[53] Tuchman and Fortin, *Edging Women Out*, p.78.
[54] Alison Booth, *Greatness Engendered: George Eliot and Virginia Woolf* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992), p.109.

So, for Eliot, the 'best' woman writer achieved literary success by 'keeping to the delineation of what a woman's experience and observation bring within her special knowledge' ('Silly Novels', p.330). The 'special knowledge' that Eliot praises in this essay is 'a real picture of a woman's life' ('Silly Novels', p.329). As such, in her model of the cultured woman writer, Eliot was in effect limiting women's capabilities to their own special sphere, the domestic, their 'precious speciality', as she put it ('Silly Novels', p.162). She was, however, also arguing that the feminine should be valued, hence her championing of Dutch realism.[55] Eliot was, therefore, not only 'drawing attention to the inadequacy of contemporary models of female authorship', but also, as Booth points out, championing the domestic that had been so devalued.[56] Easley rightly points out that Eliot attempted to create the 'image of the cultured and ambiguously gendered author' in 'Silly Novels', but she places too great an emphasis on Eliot's attempt to do so through the construction of a gender neutral narrative voice.[57]

As I mentioned earlier, Johnston and Fraser have highlighted the significance of the timing of Eliot's essay, arguing that it was published at the 'very moment' when the debate over women's literary professionalism was 'beginning to be considered seriously […] at least by women'.[58] Laurel Brake has pointed out that 'Silly Novels' in fact made up just a small part of the *Westminster*'s wider engagement with many aspects of the 'woman question', noting that 'from the end of 1855 to the end of 1857 the *Westminster* may be seen to treat gender as a calculated part of its radical campaign, with gender arising in a range of settings', including

[55] For a recent discussion of Eliot and Dutch realism, see Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Art of the Everyday: Dutch Painting and the Realist Novel* (Princeton, New Jersey and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008).
[56] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, p.117.
[57] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, p.11.
[58] Johnston and Fraser, 'The Professionalization of Women's Writing', p.231.

essays on divorce, fashion and legislation.[59] Easley adds that by taking advantage of the *Westminster*'s policy of anonymity, Eliot was able to participate covertly in the debate over women's literary professionalism. It was a fact that Eliot herself acknowledged, writing to one friend about another essay published in the *Westminster*: 'The articles appear[ed] to have produced a strong impression, and that impression would be a little counteracted if the author were known to be a woman' (*GEL*: II: 218).

I want to pause here for a moment to consider the timing of 'Silly Novels', for it is significant not only in the wider debate over women's writing, but also for Eliot's developing sense of a public identity. She wrote the essay during the summer of 1856, just months before she began her first piece of fiction. In December 1857, she wrote a note in her journal called 'How I Came to Write Fiction'. This note gives us an insight into Eliot's evolving sense of authorial identity, but it is 'at once revealing and misleading'.[60] Eliot wrote that she had had the 'vague dream' of writing fiction for most of her life, and that, by the time she travelled to Germany with Lewes in 1854, she had already written an 'introductory chapter' which described 'a Staffordshire village and the life of the neighbouring farm houses'.[61] She explained that whilst holidaying in Tenby, she showed her first efforts to Lewes, and although initially he doubted her potential for 'dramatic power' he nevertheless urged her to continue writing fiction (largely because at this point they both needed a stable and regular income).[62]

This note can be read as a metaphor for the author's own professional identity: it is located in a personal space, her journal, but was written with a public audience in

[59] Brake, 'The *Westminster* and Gender and Mid-Century', p.254.
[60] Kirstin Brady, *George Eliot* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p.18.
[61] George Eliot, 'How I Came to Write Fiction', in Rosemary Ashton, (ed.), *Selected Critical Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.322.
[62] Eliot, 'How I Came to Write Fiction', p.322.

mind. It is interesting that although Eliot clearly aligned herself with the emerging conventions of realism in her journalism as well as her fiction, in this note she employed something of the sensational in describing real life events as part of a dream device. As Eliot herself put it, '[d]reams usually play an important part in fiction, but rarely, I think, in actual life' (*GEL*: II: 309). She represents herself in this note as cautious and reluctant to enter the literary marketplace: there is no acknowledgment here that she had already done so through her editorial work, and that in that work she was far from reluctant or cautious, having been instrumental in ensuring the *Westminster*'s continued success. Instead, Eliot represents her ambition for a literary career as a 'vague dream', her first effort at creative work having being written many years before but only blossoming through Lewes's encouragement. As Johnston and Fraser note:

> Autobiographical forms of self-representation justify the choice of vocation, suggest women's qualifications, explain or negotiate their resistance to the separate spheres ideology, and often claim, as carefully as possible, either a place for themselves within the canon, or at least equal status with male writers. Why else would George Eliot take the trouble at the outset of her career to write down how it all came about unless she had an eye on posterity and a sense that she had professionally arrived?[63]

So, although it was written like a 'confession', 'How I Came to Write Fiction' was, like Eliot's correspondence, another 'playful' representation of 'the self'.[64] As such, this note forms an important step in Eliot's negotiation of her professional identity for in it she chose to represent her successful move into the public sphere in purely domestic terms.

To return to Eliot's thesis in 'Silly Novels', feminist critics continue to disagree over Eliot's intentions in this essay, and this disagreement reflects the tension inherent in Eliot's argument. Beryl Gray explains that some critics 'castigate

[63] Johnston and Fraser, 'The Professionalization of Women's Writing', p.245.
[64] Bodenheimer, *The Real Life of Mary Ann Evans*, p.xiv.

[…] George Eliot for the way the article criticizes the quality of women's writing', while others go further to condemn the article as 'unsisterly'.[65] Others argue that in fact Eliot was 'making significant claims for women's true capabilities as novelists'.[66] For Clare Pettit, Eliot was attempting to 'usurp the male world of serious professional literature, and to eschew the amateurish female literary marketplace of light confections and "silly novels."'[67] Yet it is clear why some feminists object to the essay, for Eliot's journalistic voice does appear at times clearly masculine and not at all 'ambiguous' as Alexis Easley has claimed. Easley suggests that anonymity allowed Eliot to 'construct a complexly gendered narrative voice that carried over into her early fiction' and that this 'complexly gendered voice' became the 'means through which Eliot was able to gain cultural power [and later] position her work within "high-culture" literary tradition during an era when women's writing was increasingly assigned low cultural status'.[68] However, the passage below is one often commented upon for the use of a male voice:

> There seems to be a notion abroad among women, rather akin to the superstition that the speech and actions of idiots are inspired, and that the human being most entirely exhausted of common sense is the fittest vehicle for revelation. To judge from their writings, there are certain ladies who think that an amazing ignorance, of both science and life, is the best possible qualification for forming an opinion on the knottiest moral and speculative questions' ('Silly Novels', pp.148-149).

As Easley suggests, masculine narration is implied here through the process of objectifying 'certain ladies' as the 'other to the masculinized voice of the periodical reviewer'.[69] The 'knottiest moral and speculative questions' which are out of the intellectual reach of the uneducated woman are, presumably, within the reach of this implied cultured male reviewer.

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[65] Kathleen McCormack, 'George Eliot's First Fiction: Targetting *Blackwood's*', *Bibliotheck: A Scottish Journal of Bibliography and Allied Topics*, vol. 21 (1996), p.70.
[66] Gray, 'George Eliot and the *Westminster Review*', p.222.
[67] Pettit, *Patent Inventions*, p.248.
[68] Easley, 'Authorship, Gender and Identity', p.146.
[69] Easley, 'Authorship, Gender and Identity', p.149.

Yet, Easley suggests that the narrative voice in 'Silly Novels' is not easily identified as either 'masculine' or 'feminine'. She argues that although:

> the "editorial we" of many "high-Victorian" periodicals was assumed to be masculine […] it most often took on more ambiguous gendering – especially when women writers were disguised behind it. [….] Thus, ironically, at the same time that the periodical press constructed a limited, domestic role for women *novelists,* it provided women *journalists* with the opportunity to transgress the boundaries of these constraining identities through anonymous publication.[70]

This argument, however, needs to be qualified. 'Silly Novels' was published anonymously in 1856, with no indication that the author was a woman, and though the magazine had a reputation for being a medium for radical thought, most contributors were still presumed to be male.[71] As in 'Woman in France', the 'editorial we' of this essay was, by the convention of 'high journalism', very much defined as a male voice. However, Easley is right to point out that the narrative voice of 'Silly Novels' does become more complex as the essay progresses, but Eliot's voice never seems to move away from the masculine 'editorial we' in the way that Easley suggests. This is most clearly the case when Eliot described her ideal of a 'cultured woman writer', a passage that Easley reads as an example of Eliot's 'ambiguously gendered narrative voice':

> A really cultured woman, like a really cultured man, is all the simpler and the less obstructive for her knowledge; it has made her see herself and her opinions in something like just proportions; she does not make it a pedestal from which she flatters herself that she commands a complete view of men and things, but makes it a point of observation from which to form a right estimate of herself. […] She does not write to confound philosophers, perhaps because she is able to write books that delight them. In conversation she is the least formidable of women, because she understands you, without wanting to make you aware that you *can't* understand her ('Silly Novels', pp.155-156).

Eliot's careful balancing of a 'really cultured woman' and a 'really cultured man' implies that 'successful authorship is less a matter of gender than of self-culture'.[72] As

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[70] Easley, 'Authorship, Gender and Identity', p.148.
[71] George Henry Lewes, for example, anonymously published 'Lady Novelists', a similar essay to Eliot's 'Silly Novels', in the *Westminster* in July 1852.
[72] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, p.119.

Eliot later wrote to John Blackwood, literature should be 'an instrument of culture' and her ideal woman writer would act as a medium for that culture (*GEL*: III: 44). This passage suggests that the woman writer should employ her vocation as a form of self-culture, rather than as an opportunity for self-display, or as a means of making money.[73] As I mentioned in the Introduction, making money was a key factor in the professionalism debate, and for Eliot writing was 'innocent' but 'publication [was] guilty and also perilous'.[74] But, as Pettit notes, though Eliot was 'peculiarly resistant to mass publishing', she needed to make money to support herself, Lewes, Lewes's wife Agnes and her children.[75] Furthermore, as Zakreski has noted, a professional woman controls her public image: she must 'know how to control the public perception of her private identity'.[76]

The reconciliation between art as refining work and a means of earning a living is one that Eliot found difficult, and her condemnation of money making and of self-display in 'Silly Novels' is echoed in Eliot's later representations of the woman artist-professional in her fiction. For Eliot, the path to professionalism for women was to be found through minimising engagement with the marketplace, and appearing to resist the desire for self-display. In other words, the ego and altruistic motives need to be reconciled.[77] Pettit points out that Eliot needed to 'construct a model of authorship [….] that satisfied her need for a "public" sphere not defined economically, but rather as a sphere of moral virtue and high culture'.[78]

So, in her description of a 'really cultured woman' in this passage, Eliot attempted to replace the current image of the woman writer, which was linked to

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[73] Easley, 'Authorship, Gender and Identity', p.149.
[74] Gallagher, 'George Eliot and *Daniel Deronda*', p.45.
[75] Pettit, *Patent Inventions*, p.267.
[76] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.108.
[77] Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850–1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p.65.
[78] Pettit, *Patent Inventions*, p.242.

essentialist notions of femininity, with the 'image of the cultured author' or the 'self-cultured' author, linked to the notion of writing as artistic vocation and public service.[79] That Eliot viewed herself in this way is clear from her correspondence. In 1859, referring to *Adam Bede*, she proudly wrote to a friend: 'I have at last found out my true vocation […]. I have turned out to be an artist – not, as you are, with the pencil and the pallet. I have written a novel' (*GEL*: III: 186). Her letters also reveal that she regarded those for whom novel writing was not an artistic vocation as pandering to low or popular culture. In 1860, for example, she dismissed the novelist Dinah Mulock Craik as 'a writer who is read only by novel readers, pure and simple, never by people of high culture' (*GEL*: III: 302). Indeed, the term 'popular' was firmly linked for Eliot to the 'novel readers' that she dismissed, and as such it was a label that she distanced herself from, writing to one friend: 'I have not the characteristics of the "popular author"' (*GEL*: III: 6.). By distancing the concept of culture from gender in 'Silly Novels', Eliot was attempting to distance women like herself from the 'low cultural status' frequently accorded to the woman writer.[80] It is worth pausing briefly here to compare Eliot's views on authorship with those of Charlotte Yonge and Florence Marryat, for despite Eliot's efforts to distance herself from such popular authors, they in fact shared in her ideals of authorship.

Yonge's *Womankind*, 'a review of middle-class Christian roles' for women, was serialised in *The Monthly Packet* in 1876 and published as a volume in 1878.[81] In it, Yonge developed a wide sense of woman's sphere, describing the 'hospital nurse, nursery nurse, telegraph clerk, dressmaker, teacher, as well as employment in music,

[79] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, p.11.
[80] Easley, 'Authorship, Gender and Identity', p.146.
[81] Valerie Sanders, 'Marriage and the Antifeminist Woman Novelist', in Thompson (ed.), *Victorian Women Writers*, p.27.

literature and the visual arts' as all suitable employments for women.[82] Beginning with a characteristic condemnation of 'money-making' as unfeminine, Yonge nevertheless recognised that, increasingly, 'money-making' was the goal of many modern women: '[t]his is an odd title, but everybody *does* want to make money in these days'. [83] Her advice on writing as a career reads as a strict warning and it is worth citing in detail:

> Surely if for every idle word we speak we shall have to give account, it must be more serious still to write what will go forth to hundreds. Have we any right to write what people are to read, and which will, in a measure, leave a mark on their minds, merely for our own pleasure or gain, without pains or consideration whether we do good or mischief? […] Observe, wanting money is not a sufficient reason for writing. It may be a full reason for selling a yard of lace, but not for selling a sheet of words, which are living things, and have an effect. If they are poor, weak, silly, ill-expressed sayings on some sacred subject, sentimental raptures, or unreal, unnatural stories, they do harm, by weakening the cause, and helping to make it despicable in the eyes of the enemy. (*Womankind*, pp.227-229)

Just as there are similarities in their editorships (in that both published thought-provoking articles with the intention of educating the reader), so there are commonalities between their views on the vocation of writing, though 'Silly Novels' and *Womankind* were aimed at different markets. In this passage, Yonge emphasised the responsibilities that the author takes upon herself when entering into the public sphere: words are not merely words when written for public consumption. As such, Yonge, like Eliot, saw the author as a facilitator for culture; indeed, she described herself as 'a sort of instrument for popularizing Church views'.[84] Yonge recognised that once words are published they become 'living things', a term that is suggestive of a link between procreation and production.

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[82] June Sturrock, *"Heaven and Home": Charlotte M. Yonge's Domestic Fiction and the Victorian Debate over Women* (Victoria, Canada: University of Victoria, 1995), p.59.
[83] Charlotte Mary Yonge, *Womankind* (London: Mozley and Smith, 1878), p.222. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.
[84] Ethel Romanes, *Charlotte Mary Yonge: An Appreciation* (Oxford: A. R. Mowbray, 1908), p.190.

The 'metaphor of mothering', according to Zakreski, 'was useful to women writers who wanted to maintain the appearance of femininity while perhaps suggesting more controversial ideas about female authorship'.[85] However, the link between authorship and procreation could prove contradictory, for while it suggested that 'writing itself could be an essentialist act for women', it also 'emphasised the female author's need to balance her writing with her domestic life'.[86] Given the responsibility of publication that Yonge implicitly linked to parenthood, she asked her reader to consider seriously if women should automatically have the right to make their words public: '[h]ave we any right to write what people are to read, and which will, in a measure, leave a mark on their minds' (*Womankind,* p.229). This sentence in particular closely mirrors a question that Eliot posed in her note on 'Authorship' in the posthumous *Leaves from a Note-Book* (1888), which was written between 1872 and 1878: 'a man or woman who publishes writings inevitably assumes the office of teacher or influencer of the public mind'.[87] Both writers were concerned with the effect of publication and were keen to present their own words as a kind of public service, placing themselves in the role of mother, mentor, teacher and guide.

The two motivations for publication which Yonge identifies as morally dubious were 'pleasure or gain', that is, self-display, or 'wanting money', and these of course were the two motivations that Eliot also objected to. Indeed, Eliot wrote that an 'author who would keep a pure and noble conscience, and with that a developing instead of degenerating intellect and taste, must cast out of his aims the aim to be rich'.[88] Like Eliot, Yonge objected to the 'sentimental' and the 'unreal', but unlike Eliot, Yonge was not writing for the high culture market. As Jennifer Uglow notes,

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[85] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.123.
[86] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.138.
[87] George Eliot, 'Authorship', in David Skilton (ed.), *The Early and Mid-Victorian Novel* (London: Routledge, 1993), p.178.
[88] Eliot, 'Authorship', p.179.

popular domestic novelists like Yonge were 'effectively segregated [by critics] from serious – i.e. male – literature', and pieces like Eliot's 'Silly Novels' tended to reinforce this segregation, even if this was not Eliot's intention.[89] Yet, Yonge and Eliot shared the view that poor writing 'does harm' as Yonge put it, or, as Eliot more tersely described it: 'bad literature of the sort called amusing is spiritual gin'.[90] Florence Marryat published just such 'amusing' literature: we may recall that the sub-title for *London Society* was 'light and amusing literature for the hours of relaxation', of which Marryat's novels made up no small part.

In contrast to the didactic nature of *Womankind* and 'Silly Novels', Marryat's views on authorship were expressed in a characteristically light-hearted tone. In her novel *No Intentions*, the first book that she serialised in *London Society*, Marryat's narrator concludes the story with the following question: 'Have you ever watched the process of knitting one of your own socks?' The narrator continues:

> I appeal, of course to my masculine readers. If you have, I am sure it appeared a very incomprehensible sort of business to you, and, until it appeared in its proper person, you would have been puzzled to decide how on earth it was ever going to turn into a sock at all. […] Knitting a sock and unravelling the plot of a sensational novel are two very similar things. It has been difficult at times, I dare say, to trace the reason of some of the actions in this present story […] but I trust that all has been explained to the satisfaction of the reader (*No Intentions*, p.219).

In this passage, the narrator describes the process of writing a novel as essentially feminine and complicated, a task which requires skills that the male onlooker (the 'masculine readers' whom the narrator addresses) finds bemusing. Importantly, given the evident difference between the 'light and amusing literature' that Marryat wrote compared to the domestic literature of Yonge and the cultured literature of Eliot, each praised authorship in terms of its usefulness, with Marryat figuring the female artist as literally weaving her story into a discernible product. Just as Eliot identified specific

[89] Jennifer Uglow, *George Eliot* (London: Virago, 1987), p.78.
[90] Eliot, 'Authorship', p.178.

genres of 'silly novels', so Marryat's narrator makes it clear that she is writing about one particular 'species': the sensation novel. The sensation novel was, despite the contribution of male authors like Charles Reade, considered to be a largely feminine genre, and Marryat's knitting metaphor serves to emphasise this point.[91] Unlike 'Silly Novels', which called for women to blend the masculine and the feminine, Marryat's narrator seemed to call for women to embrace the feminine alone through the sensational.

Paradoxically, however, Marryat's model of women's writing may not be as different from Eliot's as it first appears, for Marryat's model figures the woman artist at home, emphasising both domesticity and specialisation, a concept that very closely mirrors Eliot's notion of woman's 'precious speciality' ('Silly Novels', p.162). Both, therefore, saw literary women's domesticity as useful and an essential part of their professional makeup. In her journalism, Eliot had set out to define 'cultured authorship', a process that had 'important implications for the development of [her] first work of fiction', as well as her developing sense of professional identity.[92] In the next section, I explore Eliot's fictional representations of the female artist-professional in the light of the views that I have discussed, beginning with Eliot's first fiction.

**The Woman Artist-Professional in George Eliot's Fiction**

'The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton', was serialised anonymously in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1857. It was followed by 'Mr Gilfil's Love-Story' and 'Janet's Repentance', the trio making up *Scenes of Clerical Life*, which was published as a volume in 1858. In January 1857, the first instalment of 'Amos' replaced Margaret Oliphant's *The Three Athelings* as the lead serial.

[91] For more on Charles Reade's sensation fiction, see Wynne, *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine.*
[92] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, p.117.

Although all fiction in *Blackwood's* was serialised anonymously, reviewers of *The Three Athelings* (when it was published as a volume) suggest that critics were aware that it was written by a woman. For example, the anonymous reviewer for *The Critic* wrote that Oliphtant's novel was 'known to, and probably has been read by, half the readers of fiction' because it had been so popular in *Blackwood's*. Indeed, this critic commended Oliphant's story and concluded that: 'We trust the authoress will soon make *Blackwood* still more welcome than it is by commencing another novel there: she need not fear to be contrasted with Bulwer' (a reference to Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *What Will He Do With It?* (1857) which was the current serial in *Blackwood's*).[93] *The Three Athelings* is of interest here for the heroine, Agnes Atheling, is a young female artist, like Caterina Sarti in Eliot's 'Gilfil'. Writing to Eliot before the serialisation of 'Amos', he said that her story would lead the issue. Blackwood could not have known that Eliot had gained editorial experience and had been well practised in positioning important contributors herself. Blackwood's letter clearly indicated his high hopes for his newest contributor:

> It gives me very great pleasure to begin the number with Amos and I put him in that position because his merits will entitle him to it and also because it is a vital point to attract public attention to the *first* part of a Series, to which end being the first article of the first number of the year may contribute (*GEL*: II: 283).[94]

As Eliot's rival for the top spot in *Blackwood's*, Margaret Oliphant was an experienced journalist and regular contributor to the magazine.[95] Oliphant was just

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[93] [Anonymous], 'Fiction: The New Novels', *The Critic*, vol. 16, no. 391 (15 July 1875), p.318.

[94] Despite this expression of confidence in his newest contributor, Blackwood was to come to have serious reservations about Eliot's plotting of 'Gilfil' and later of 'Janet's Repentance'. In one letter, he implored Eliot to give 'a little more dignity to [Caterina's] character' by making her less 'openly devoted' to Captain Wybrow (*GEL*: II: 297). In another, this time to Lewes, Blackwood expressed his 'grave doubts' about the scene in which Caterina plots to murder Captain Wybrow. (*GEL*: II: 308). His suggestion of having Caterina dream of murdering, rather than actually attempting it, is one that Eliot flatly refused to follow.

[95] For more on Oliphant's career in journalism, see Elisabeth Jay, *Mrs Oliphant: 'A Fiction to Herself', A Literary Life* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), Linda H. Peterson, 'Margaret Oliphant's Autobiography as Professional Artist's Life', *Women's Writing*, vol. 6, no. 2 (1999), pp.261-278 and Solveig C. Robinson, 'Expanding a "Limited Orbit": Margaret Oliphant, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, and

twenty-one when Blackwood published her first novel, *Passages in the Life of Mrs Margaret Maitland, of Sunnyside, Written by Herself* (1849). She had moved to London around the same time as Eliot (in 1852) to marry her cousin, and had then begun to contribute regularly to *Blackwood's* magazine, her mother (who had links to the Blackwood family in Edinburgh) having secured an introduction to the editor some years before. In 1854 Oliphant approached Blackwood with a request for regular work as a reviewer. In her correspondence, she trivialised the significance of her request by dismissively referring to herself as *Blackwood's* 'general utility woman'.[96] However, this formalised working arrangement, in which Oliphant directly requested regular work, was an important step as it signified the start of one of the most impressive careers in journalism achieved by a Victorian woman writer.[97]

Despite her immense output for *Blackwood's* (she was once rumoured, for example, to have written an entire number of the magazine herself), Oliphant was to be ultimately disappointed by her career. The position she coveted most was that of editor, and yet despite numerous repeated attempts at securing this role for herself she was consistently refused by Blackwood and other publishers. Although Oliphant herself attributed her lack of success to her gender, Elisabeth Jay has argued that:

> The problem […] was not that Mrs Oliphant was a woman, but that she constantly compared herself to the best-paid literary men of her generation […]. None of [the] periodicals conducted by women [such as Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Belgravia* and Florence Marryat's *London Society*] was in the first rank to which Mrs Oliphant aspired, and being so well known as a factotum of Blackwood's, she was unlikely to attract offers from competitors.[98]

Jay's comments are important for, as she suggests, Oliphant may well have been offered the editorship of a literary monthly like Braddon's *Belgravia* or Marryat's *London Society*, but like Eliot, Oliphant aspired to the 'first rank' of periodicals. As

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the Development of a Critical Voice', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, vol. 38, no. 2 (Summer 2005), pp.199-220.

[96] Jay, *Mrs Oliphant*, p.15.

[97] Jay, *Mrs Oliphant*, p.15.

[98] Jay, *Mrs Oliphant*, p.249.

Jay notes: 'Thackeray, Trollope, and Dickens had all secured themselves editorships of prestigious periodicals'.[99] Oliphant's frustrations, therefore, reveal that the choice of market was crucial to financial success, something which Eliot's aversion to market considerations tended to ignore. So, Oliphant could have found success editing a popular literary magazine but would have distanced herself further from the high culture market, a compromise that she was clearly not willing to make.

Founded in 1817 as a rival to the *Edinburgh Review*, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* was aimed at a 'livelier' and 'younger' readership than that of its competitor.[100] Like the *Westminster Review*, pay was sometimes low but contributors continued to be drawn to the magazine for its 'prestige' and 'influence'.[101] By the 1850s, *Blackwood's* had become a respected family magazine and was the 'best known of the mid-century middle-class miscellaneous magazines that published non-fiction, poems, and fictional serials'.[102] As we saw in the Introduction, at mid-century when Eliot and Oliphant were contributing to *Blackwood's*, changes in legislation had led to an influx of periodicals onto the market, meaning that *Blackwood's* faced increasing competition from the new literary monthlies such as the *Cornhill* and *Fraser's*.[103] As Carol Martin has pointed out, in this increasingly competitive climate, serial fiction that could attract and keep readers was the priority of every editor, even for an established magazine like *Blackwood's*.[104]

It was Lewes who initially handled the negotiations with Blackwood over 'Amos', encouraging the editor's presumption that his new contributor was male, and

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[99] Jay, *Mrs Oliphant*, p.249. Dickens may have been 'popular' in his day, but his work was not normally accorded a particularly low cultural status, as Braddon and Marryat's novels were. It should be noted, however, that some critics did consider Dickens's novels as 'low art', and indeed Oliphant read *Great Expectations* as a sensation novel. See Wynne, *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine*, pp.83-97.
[100] Houghton and Houghton (eds), *Wellesley Index*, vol. 1, p.7.
[101] Houghton and Houghton (eds), *Wellesley Index*, vol. 1, p.9.
[102] Dillane, 'Before George Eliot', p.175.
[103] Altick, *The English Common Reader*, p.357.
[104] Carol A. Martin, *George Eliot's Serial Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1994), p.46.

probably a clergyman. When Blackwood came to write to Eliot directly, he was at a loss as to how to address his newest recruit, initially writing 'To the Author of Amos Barton', to which Eliot replied by signing herself as 'The Author of Amos Barton' (*GEL*: II: 290). In his next letter, Blackwood addressed 'My dear Amos' (*GEL*: II: 290). Elisabeth Jay has suggested that by initially remaining anonymous, even to her editor, Eliot was able to 'assume[ ] the doubly authoritative voice of a man and a clergyman in the negotiation with John Blackwood over *Scenes of Clerical Life'*.[105] It was the letter in which Blackwood addressed her as 'my dear Amos' that prompted Eliot to adopt a '*nom de plume*', explaining to him that she 'had observed […] all the advantages' of taking such a step (*GEL*: II: 292). The necessity of a pseudonym for a woman in Eliot's position has often been commented upon: not only did she want to avoid the critical double standard that, as we have seen, she herself had meted out to other women writers, but she also wanted to avoid the public scandal attached to her reputation as a woman living with a married man. Her choice, however, was more strategic than these motivations alone would imply. As Eliot wrote to one friend: 'to an author not already famous, anonymity is the highest *prestige*' (*GEL*: II: 309). She was aware at this stage in her career that she had a reputation to build, as well as one to protect; she knew that anonymity best served her purposes for the present, and so the name 'George Eliot' was not used until 1858 when the volume edition of *Scenes of Clerical Life* was published. Eliot's professional identity was, therefore, still evolving when 'Gilfil' was anonymously serialised in *Blackwood's* for she had not yet adopted a pseudonym.

Traditionally, critical interest in 'Gilfil' has focused upon Eliot's defence of her 'gin-and-water' hero, in which her narrator 'plead[s]' for readers' patience with

[105] Jay, *Mrs Oliphant*, p.74.

such a seemingly unromantic subject.[106] Indeed, in his 'Introduction' to the 1988 reprint of the story, Thomas A. Noble rather dismissively labels this story as a 'failure' of 'romantic fiction'.[107] Yet, for the critic interested in the representation of women and artistic professionalism, it is Caterina Sarti, Gilfil's eventual wife, who is of interest for, as Linda Lewis notes, Caterina is 'George Eliot's first silenced singer'.[108] Like Mirah Lapidoth in *Daniel Deronda*, Caterina demonstrates some of the characteristics described in Eliot's professional ideal, particularly the values of training and art as refining work for women. Yet Caterina does struggle with her love of performance; she demonstrates some of the egoism of which Eliot was so suspicious, and so she is ultimately silenced, first by marriage and then in death. As Lewis notes, '[w]hen Caterina Sarti becomes Caterina Gilfil, Eliot makes no further reference to her continuing her art'.[109]

The final instalments of Oliphant's *The Three Athelings* were serialised in *Blackwood's* alongside Eliot's story, and so the reader of *Blackwood's* read two stories featuring women artists in close succession. *The Three Athelings* is unusual within Oliphant's fiction because it is her only novel featuring a literary woman, though Oliphant, like Eliot, published her views on women's writing in her journalism.[110] Carol Martin has noted that Oliphant's serial began slowly, and was, in the early instalments 'at best a series of vignettes', following the uneventful lives of an 'ordinary family', the Athelings of the title.[111] Yet, this ordinary family quickly become the subject of 'quite extraordinary' events.[112] As the public taste for

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[106] George Eliot, 'Mr Gilfil's Love-Story', *Scenes of Clerical Life*, ed. Thomas A. Noble (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p.74. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.
[107] Thomas A. Noble, 'Introduction', in Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life*, p.ix.
[108] Lewis, *Germaine de Staël, George Sand and the Victorian Woman Artist*, p.168.
[109] Lewis, *Germaine de Staël, George Sand and the Victorian Woman Artist*, p.172.
[110] Although, as Elisabeth Jay notes, in some of Oliphant's early fiction (such as *The Quiet Heart* (1854)) there are male characters with authorial ambition. Jay, *Mrs Oliphant*, p.76.
[111] Martin, *George Eliot's Serial Fiction*, p.45.
[112] Martin, *George Eliot's Serial Fiction*, p.45.

sensational literature grew, Oliphant tailored her serial to suit the changing marketplace and drew in plot lines of betrayal, seduction and illegitimacy.[113] The early instalments of the novel, published almost a year before 'Gilfil' began serialisation, focus almost exclusively upon the heroine Agnes and her developing talent as a writer. Agnes's literary skills are first introduced to the reader through a direct address in which the narrator adopts a heavily ironic tone:

> Dearest friend! most courteous reader! suspend your judgement. It was not her fault. This poor child had no more blame in the matter than Marian [her sister] had for her beauty, which was equally involuntary. Agnes Atheling was not wise; she had no particular gift for conversation, and none whatever for logic; no accomplishments, and not a very great deal of information […]. Yet genius, in some kind and degree, certainly did belong to her - for the girl had that strange faculty of expression which is as independent of education, knowledge, or culture as any wandering angel.[114]

The hyperbole of the opening sentence, in which the narrator implores the reader to 'suspend your judgement', serves to satirise the dismay of critics writing about literary women at the time, critics who were all too ready to make 'judgements' in essays such as 'Silly Novels'. In this passage, Agnes's skill is linked to essentialist notions of femininity for it is associated with her sister's beauty: she cannot help her writing just as her sister Marian cannot help being beautiful. Significantly, Agnes's 'genius' is 'independent' of 'culture': she is not a cultured author at this early stage in her career. Thus she is figured as a kind of literary 'angel in the house' who is untrained, uneducated and uncultured, and yet still has a 'genius in some kind and degree' – a feminine genius or a 'precious speciality' ('Silly Novels', p.330).

The heavily ironic tone of this passage should not be overlooked: Oliphant was clearly lampooning the horrified critics who decried the publication of women's 'silly novels'. Yet, this does not necessarily mean that Oliphant was championing

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[113] For more on the demand for sensation literature at mid-century see Wynne, *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine*, pp.1-21.

[114] Margaret Oliphant, *The Athelings, or the Three Gifts* (New York: Harper and Brothers: 1857), pp.5-6. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

feminine literature, for whilst this passage makes clear that feminine literature has its place, the implication is that that place is below 'culture'. This is a distinction that Agnes's eventual husband, the Reverend Lionel Rivers, makes later in the novel after reading Agnes's first book, *Hope Hazelwood*:

> It was not, in any degree whatever, an intellectual display; he by no means felt himself pitted against the author of it, or entering into any kind of rivalship with her. […] It wanted a great many of the qualities which critics praise. […] The reader knew very well that *he* could not have done this, nor any thing like it, yet his intellectual pride was not roused (*Athelings*, p.162).

Rivers acknowledges that Agnes's writing is beyond his capabilities, '*he* could not have done this', but his 'pride' is not 'roused' because her novel is typically 'feminine', not one that the critics will praise and focusing on a marriage plot and sensation: it is, in short, a 'silly novel'.

The narrator goes on to comment directly on Agnes's ambition, an important aspect in the balance between egoism and altruism. Whilst Agnes's family are 'charmed and astonished' by her talent, Agnes herself has a slightly more reserved reaction to the thought of becoming a published author:

> As for Agnes, she was as much amused as the rest at the thought of being "an author", and laughed, with her bright eyes running over, at this grand anticipation. […] In the meantime she was more interested in what she was about than in the result of it, and pleased herself with the turn of her pretty sentences and the admirable orderliness of her manuscript; for she was only a girl (*Athelings*, p.7).

Agnes's literary ambition, then, is safely dismissed as the dreams of 'only a girl', a label which serves further to infantilise and feminise the heroine. When her sister suggests that she might serialise *Hope Hazelwood* 'every month with pictures […] like Dickens and Thackeray', the family laugh at this ambition as the 'grandest and most magnificent nonsense' in placing the 'young author upon this astonishing level' (*Athelings*, p.13). At this stage in her career, Agnes is not interested in writing as art:

there is no moral drive behind her writing or a desire for excellence, she pens 'light literature' which is popular, in the sense that it is a commercial success.[115]

This first novel also tempts Agnes into the trap of egoism: it is the 'pretty sentences' and the 'admirable orderliness' of her prose that best please Agnes about her first manuscript (*Athelings,* p15). When sending *Hope Hazelwood* off to a potential publisher, she wants to tie it up in a 'delicate wrapper' adorned with 'pretty ribbons' (*Athelings,* p.15), thus her manuscript becomes the means through which she is able to satisfy her vanity. Agnes's book, her 'pretty sentences' and manuscript that she dresses up like a doll in 'delicate' wrappers and 'pretty ribbons', thus becomes a reflection of herself on the market. Interestingly, *The Three Athelings* itself was praised on the same terms, the anonymous critic of *the Saturday Review* approvingly calling it 'a very pretty novel', going on to write that '[t]he young authoress [Agnes] and her first book are very prettily drawn; and as they are drawn by a lady, we are warranted in supposing that they embody real experiences on the subject'.[116] Agnes and Oliphant were, therefore, praised for writing in a suitably feminine genre and style.

Like Agnes, Caterina Sarti is feminised and infantilised by those around her. Having travelled to Italy to find inspiration for the refurbishment of his manor house, Sir Christopher Cheverel adopts the orphaned Caterina to be the 'minstrel of the Manor' ('Gilfil', p.105). Caterina is, therefore, just another '*objet d'art*' in Sir Christopher's collection of 'foreign oddit[ies]'.[117] Although adopted with the intention of bringing some 'music' to the manor house, Caterina's position is like that of a

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[115] Oliphant wrote about what she called 'society novels' in an article on 'modern light literature' in *Blackwood's*. See [Margaret Oliphant], 'Modern Light Literature', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (October 1857), vol. 82, pp.423-437.
[116] [Anonymous], 'The Athelings', *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art,* vol. 4, no. 94 (15 August 1857), pp.164–165.
[117] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic,* p.486.

governess in that she is neither part of the family nor a servant. Her role is to be 'useful', to sort worsteds, keep accounts, and read aloud for Lady Cheverel in her old age ('Gilfil', p.93). However, Caterina is also 'the pet of the household' ('Gilfil', p.97), a child in a house that lacks children's voices. When her adoptive parents notice her vocal talent, they employ a singing master to train her for several years and it is this 'unexpected gift [that] made a great alteration in Caterina's position'; this professional training serves to alter Caterina's position by placing her above the servants of the house ('Gilfil', p.100). Although, as Linda Lewis has noted, 'Caterina's remarkable musical talent is not […] displayed on a stage to earn her livelihood' she is, 'in an odd way', a professional singer for she has benefitted from training and has even adopted the 'teasing title of "minstrel of the Manor."'[118]

When we meet Caterina, in the grounds of Cheverel Manor, the narrator describes her 'fairy tread' and 'small stature and slim figure' which rests 'on the tiniest of full-grown feet' ('Gilfil', pp.77-78). Caterina is a fully-grown woman at this point in the narrative, and yet she is also child-like: her feet are fully-grown and yet they are tiny, like those of a child. As such, she combines sexual maturity with a child-like innocence from the outset. As Lewis notes, physically Caterina presents a stark contrast to 'tall, statuesque goddesses'[119] such as Maggie, Dinah, Romola, Dorothea and Gwendolen, but in her doll-like appearance she does closely resemble Mirah Lapidoth, who is described as having a 'little woman's figure'.[120] As well as this infantalisation, Caterina and Mirah are also consistently linked to animal and bird imagery. The narrator describes Caterina's 'large dark eyes, which, in their inexpressive unconscious beauty, resemble the eyes of a fawn' ('Gilfil', p.78). She is

[118] Lewis, *Germaine de Staël, George Sand the Victorian Woman Artist,* p.171.
[119] Lewis, *Germaine de Staël, George Sand the Victorian Woman Artist,* p.169.
[120] George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, ed. Terence Cave (London: Penguin, 2003), p.190. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

elsewhere described as a 'black-eyed monkey', a 'little song bird' and 'stock-dove', imagery which links her to Mirah whose singing voice is described as that of a 'cooing' bird (*Deronda*, p.374). By linking Mirah and Caterina to natural imagery in this way, Eliot further naturalised and feminised their vocations and talents.

Caterina's innocence, which is implied by her 'fawn-like unconsciousness', ensures that she does not indulge her egoism in her initial performances. Her first performance, given at the request of Sir Christopher, takes place in the drawing-room of Cheverel Manor. Though she is not singing in public, Caterina's choice of music links her to the stage because she sings an opera which was then 'heard on the London stage' ('Gilfil', p.86). Lady Cheverel's comments after her performance serve to strengthen this implied link between Caterina and public performance, for when Caterina throws herself dramatically at the feet of Sir Christopher, Lady Cheverel chastises her for her 'stage-players' antics' ('Gilfil', p.86). Importantly, as Catherine Gallagher notes, this element of 'theatrical performance' of which Eliot was so suspicious was also what she saw as the 'best in art'. As Gallagher explains:

> The performance requires the submergence of the self in the words and thoughts of another […]. To forget the woman in the artist, to become the medium of the collective project of culture, Eliot often argues, is to enable the spiritual [as opposed to market] economy.[121]

'Submergence of the self' is what Caterina excels at, while also faithfully representing the truth of what she thinks and feels through her art. This 'spiritual' element of performance forms part of Eliot's notion of art as refining and enhancing self-culture, and the following passage demonstrates how Caterina as an artist grows through this 'submergence of the self':

> And her singing – the one thing in which she ceased to be passive, and became prominent – lost none of its energy. Sometimes she wondered herself how it was that, whether she felt sad or angry, […] it was always a relief to her to sing. Those full deep notes she sent forth seemed to be lifting the pain from

[121] Gallagher, 'Geroge Eliot and *Daniel Deronda*', p.56.

> her heart – seemed to be carrying away the madness from her brain (‘Gilfil’, p.127).

In this performance, Caterina finds relief through singing; her art carries ‘away the madness from her brain’ and thus, temporarily at least, calms her all too passionate temperament. Such refinement is an important element in the performance of other artists: Armgart, another of Eliot’s singers, claims that without her voice, the ‘channel to her soul, she would have become a “murderess”’.[122] Caterina’s performance is all the more ‘natural’ for it mirrors the ‘tragedy’ that ‘was going on before [her] eyes’ (her unrequited love for Wybrow), and thus she is representing what she ‘saw, thought, and felt’, as Eliot described in ‘Woman in France’ (‘Woman in France’, p.9). Thus, ironically given the drawing-room setting for her performance, Caterina has the spirit of a true professional, even though she is not paid; as the narrator comments: ‘[i]n her happiest moment she could never have played […] so well’ (‘Gilfil’, p.139).

Yet, there is a sense of unease throughout ‘Gilfil’ regarding the self-display of performance, even within the private setting of the drawing-room. Caterina’s increasing awareness of the power of her position as a performer, of her body on display, is linked to her sexual awakening. When Anthony touches her, she ‘felt an electric thrill’, a moment which signifies that the ‘fawn-like unconsciousness was gone’ (‘Gilfil’, p.87). Caterina’s art then becomes perverted for she begins to use her talent as a weapon in the battle for Anthony with his fiancée, Miss Assher. Requesting yet another performance from his ‘minstrel’, this time in front of Miss Assher, Sir Christopher draws the reader’s attention to Caterina’s body as forming part of her performance:

> Now, little monkey, you must be in your best voice; you’re the minstrel of the Manor, you know, and be sure you have a pretty gown and a new ribbon. You must not be dressed in russet, though you are a singing-bird (‘Gilfil’, p.105).

[122] George Eliot, *Armgart*, in Antonie Gerard van den Broek (ed.), *The Complete Shorter Poetry of George Eliot* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2005), p.95, l.414. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

Here, Sir Christopher commands his 'minstrel' not only to sing, but also to dress to his taste. Body, as well as voice, are an essential part of Caterina's performance. Caterina meekly obeys Sir Christopher's directions on what she should wear:

> she would sing well, Miss Assher should not think her utterly insignificant. So she put on her grey silk gown and her cherry-coloured ribbon […] not forgetting the pair of round pearl earrings which Sir Christohper had told Lady Cheverel to give her, because Tina's little ears were so pretty ('Gilfil', p.106).

This passage seems to foreshadow Mirah's experience in *Daniel Deronda* when she describes feeling like a 'musical box', vulnerable to being forced open to perform 'at any minute' (*Deronda*, p.213). As the anonymous author of 'Women Artists' (1858) commented, the female performer must endure being 'stared at, commented on, clapped or hissed by a crowded and often unmannered audience' and it is this sense of exposure and vulnerability that Caterina and Mirah share.[123]

Innocence lost through performance or retained despite it is often one of the central concerns in Eliot's characterisation of all her female artists, and as Caterina obeys Sir Christopher's commands on what to wear she becomes aware of the power of her body on display. As she performs, Caterina competes for Anthony's affection through her temporarily elevated position as 'minstrel':

> her emotion, instead of being a hindrance to her singing, gave her additional power. Her singing was what she could do best; it was her one point of superiority, in which it was probable she would excel the highborn beauty whom Anthony was to woo; and her love, her jealousy, her pride, her rebellion against her destiny, made one stream of passion which welled forth in the deep rich tones of her voice ('Gilfil', p.86).

In this passage, Caterina's performance has become her weapon, for she is aware that 'while she was singing she was queen of the room' ('Gilfil', p.111). At this moment, Caterina loses the moral dimension of her performance that is so crucial in Eliot's conception of the artist, and thus her gift becomes perverted. Though she still sings well, her motivation is no longer altruistic, and so Caterina descends to the level of a

[123] [Anonymous], 'Women Artists', *The Westminster Review*, vol. 14 (1858), p.164.

'stage player'. For Agnes in Oliphant's novel, however, there is initially no such compromise between egoism and altruism, for Agnes is not a true artist like Caterina (initially, at least).

The success of Agnes's first novel forces her into professional life, meaning that she engages with the public sphere in a more direct manner than Caterina, who only performs in drawing rooms. Retention of innocence, despite engaging with the marketplace, was as important to Oliphant as it was to Eliot, and so the narrator emphasises Agnes's naivety. Though she dresses her manuscript up in pretty ribbons, it is her brother who takes it to potential publishers, encouraging their presumption that he is the author.[124] In the weeks before the publication of her first book, Agnes starts to notice '[p]relusive little paragraphs in the papers' but, completely lacking in vanity, she does 'not understand [them] to be advertisements' (*Athelings,* p.38). When she becomes the 'reigning whim' of the literary socialite Mrs Edgerley after the success of her first novel, Agnes continues to resist the temptation of egoism. On visiting Mrs Edgerley in her Richmond villa, which Agnes describes as 'a paradise on earth', she experiences feelings of extreme discomfort at being so obviously paraded. She is not like Caterina, who exploits the power of her performance:

> The young author looked wistfully into the brightness of the drawing-room, with some hope of catching the eye of her patroness […] [Agnes and Marian] stood quite alone in these magnificent rooms, which were slowly filling with strange faces. Agnes was afraid to look up, lest any one should see that there were actual tears under her eyelids […] it was a hard enough lesson for neophytes so young and innocent […]. One or two observers asked who they were, but nobody could answer the question. They were quite by themselves, and evidently knew no one (*Athelings,* pp.53-71).

The room is too bright, like a stage; Agnes is alone but for her sister, amongst 'strange' faces and feels so uncomfortable that she is brought to tears, emphasising her femininity and vulnerability. Her discomfort is similar to Mirah's in *Daniel*

[124] Margaret Oliphant also asked her brother to take her first manuscript to a publisher, who assumed her brother to be the author for a significant amount of time. See Jay, *Mrs Oliphant*.

*Deronda*, who describes the 'fiery furnace' of the stage, being lit up with a 'glare' and sneered at by strange 'faces' (*Deronda*, p.217). However, Agnes is playing a role here, that of the *ingénue*. Suitably for a young, inexperienced novelist who is new to the profession, Agnes is demure, overwhelmed, and emotional. There is no vulgar display of ambition here, but this does not mean that Agnes is not ambitious; it means that she has already learnt to pose as an amateur by appearing to shun public life. Performing the *ingénue* was also useful to Florence Marryat when starting out in her career.

In describing Agnes's embarrassment and confusion as an inexperienced author, Oliphant was reflecting her own experiences of literary London, something that reviewers noted with approval. Writing about Oliphant's description of literary London, the anonymous reviewer for *The Critic* noted that '[a]ll this Mrs Oliphant has probably experienced, and hence the truthfulness which guided her pen'.[125] Elisabeth Jay has argued that Oliphant 'used' Agnes's career as:

> little more than a vehicle for introducing the reader to the minor literary circles of publishers, lion-hunters, and journalists that Frank Oliphant introduced her to in London. Serious issues look as if they are about to be broached when her clergyman lover voices his objections to her chosen career [… ]. Further discussion of this matter is sidestepped, however, and the demands of a romantic plot triumph over any deeper exploration of the woman writer's life.[126]

Although the demands of a romantic plot do somewhat overshadow Oliphant's exploration of the literary woman towards the end of the novel, her characterisation of Agnes is far more significant than Jay's comments suggest. Indeed, Agnes's experience of 'coming out' as an author in London seems to mirror very closely that of Oliphant. The following passage is taken from Oliphant's autobiography:

> I – with my shyness and complete unaquaintance with the ways of people who gave parties and paid incessant visits – was only unable to take any pleasure in

[125] [Anonymous], 'Fiction: The New Novels', p.318.
[126] Jay, *Mrs Oliphant*, p.260.

> it [London]. That is to say, I got as quickly as I could into a corner and stood there, rather wistfully wishing to know people, but not venturing to make any approach, waiting till some one should speak to me; which much exasperated my aspiring hostess, who had picked me up as a new novelist.[127]

Like Agnes, Oliphant describes being 'picked up' as a 'new novelist', only to be neglected by her fickle host. As in the passage which describes Agnes and Mrs Edgerley, here Oliphant figures herself as cowering in a corner of a busy and noisy room, feeling distinctly uncomfortable and exposed in her newly public position. Unlike Agnes, however, Oliphant was eager to join in; 'wistfully' watching those around her and clearly ambitious to become part of the London literary circle that so intimidates her heroine.

An important step in Agnes's transformation from popular novelist to serious author is her disillusionment with such celebrity and egoism. The 'momentary idolatry' quickly passes:

> The people who had been dying to know the author of *Hope Hazelwood*, had all found out that the shy young genius did not talk in character – had no gift of conversation, and, indeed, did nothing at all to keep up her fame (*Athelings*, p.77).

By playing the part of the *ingénue*, Agnes has successfully negotiated a way into the public sphere, deflecting the distracting and unwelcome attentions of Mrs Edgerley and thus enabled to continue writing without the distraction of celebrity. Significantly, Agnes's second book, *The Heir*, is very different from the first: unlike *Hope Hazelwood*, *The Heir* is described as 'simple' and 'earnest' (*Athelings*, p.76). Agnes takes the plot for this book from her own observations of characters and events around her, thus representing Eliot's ideal literary woman who should be an 'intelligent observer [… ] of character and events' ('Woman in France', p.14).

In a plot device which points towards the postmodern, the plot of *The Heir* is in fact the sub-plot of *The Three Athelings* in which an 'unsuspected heir' comes to

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[127] Jay (ed.), *The Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant*, pp.38-39.

learn of his rights and gain 'his true place' (*Athelings,* p.160). Echoing the spiritual relief that Caterina finds in singing, Agnes finds consolation in her vocation: 'If it did no other good in the world, there was the brightest stream of practical relief and consolation in Agnes Atheling's gift' (*Athelings,* p.157). Although the plot-line of a usurped heir might be considered sensational, Agnes demonstrates that 'precious speciality', which her 'experience and observation bring within her special knowledge' ('Silly Novels', p.330), and she produces a more sophisticated novel as a result. It is an appreciation of this second book that leads Agnes's eventual husband to reconsider her skills as an author. Rivers had been a sceptic, who was quick to voice his disdain:

> 'I think a woman's intellect ought to be receptive without endeavouring to produce […] Intelligence is the noblest gift of a woman; originality is neither to be wished nor looked for.' […] the Rector was very much fretted by this unlooked-for intelligence. He felt as if it were done on purpose, and meant as a personal offence to him (*Athelings,* p.126).

Yet, on reading her second novel, Rivers asks Agnes: 'what put that into your idle little brain? It is not like fiction; it is quite as strange and out of the way as if it had been life' (*Athelings,* p.170): truth, it would seem, is stranger than fiction for Rivers. As his comments make clear, *The Heir* has elevated Agnes above the lower status of 'fiction' writing (the 'novel readers' that Eliot insisted were different from 'people of high culture' (*GEL*: III: 302)) into domestic realism: she has captured the story 'as if it had been life'.

Therefore, by the end of Oliphant's novel, Agnes has developed from novel writing to pursuing a 'vocation' and, importantly, 'making very little demonstration of it' (*Athelings,* p.190). She develops 'both in reputation and in riches, girl though she still was', and becomes an author whose voice 'went out over the world' and 'charmed the multitudes' (*Athelings,* p.190). Yet, despite this success in the marketplace, Agnes has successfully resisted the temptations of vanity, having

developed from dressing her manuscript up in ribbons to living quietly at home with her parents, distancing herself from the world of literary celebrity. More than this, she has learnt to play the role of the authoress. In other words, Agnes's art has refined her character and she has learnt to control her desire for self-display. Unlike Eliot, whom feminist scholars often accuse of having not allowed her heroines the creative freedom that she herself enjoyed, Oliphant allowed her heroine both a successful career and the traditional reward for the Victorian heroine: marriage.[128] Indeed, Agnes marries the Reverend Rivers, the man who was most sceptical about her chosen career. Yet, as in 'Gilfil', no mention is made of her professional life after her marriage, of how she will play the roles of worker and wife, for the novel ends with Rivers's proposal. This is a point I will return to in the following chapters, for the implications for work after the heroine's marriage is a problem that Charlotte Yonge and Florence Marryat addressed in more detail than Oliphant or Eliot.

Like Agnes, Mirah Lapidoth manages to negotiate a successful career for herself. Although nearly twenty years separate 'Gilfil' and *Daniel Deronda*, Caterina seems to return in the form of Mirah, for despite their differences, Mirah is, like Caterina, a doll-like, reluctant performer. Having been forced to sing on the stage as a child, as an adult Mirah only performs in private. Unlike Caterina, Mirah, however, earns her living by her vocation. In Eliot's last novel 'the close connection between selling oneself as a sexual commodity and selling oneself as an artist' becomes most obviously apparent.[129] Mirah and Gwendolen Harleth are central to the metaphor of commodification for just as Gwendolen sells herself in marriage to Grandcourt, so Mirah is sold by her father, 'first as a singer and then as a prostitute'.[130] The

[128] See Zelda Austen, 'Why Feminist Critics are Angry with George Eliot', *College English*, vol. 37, no. 6 (February 1976), p.549-561.
[129] Gallagher, 'George Eliot and *Daniel Deronda*', p.53.
[130] Gallagher, 'George Eliot and *Daniel Deronda*', p.53.

comments of a passenger who shares a boat trip with Mirah and her father connect public display and economic exchange explicitly when he remarks: 'I wonder what market he means that daughter for' (*Deronda,* p.215). Like Caterina, Mirah is represented as an innocent who does not relish the self-display of her performance, but unlike Caterina, Mirah develops her talent and sings in private drawing rooms for money.

We are told that Mirah's intensive 'theatrical training had left no recognisable trace; probably her manners had not much changed since she played the forsaken child at nine years of age' (*Deronda,* p.225). Her lack of vanity is an important element in the construction of her as a true professional as it is for Agnes: despite her training, she is not egotistical and does not indulge in the 'stage players' antics' of Caterina. She has retained her child-like innocence despite earning money for her performances. Mirah is, therefore, a 'natural' actor in the Lewesian sense.[131] Yet, Mirah's talents are deemed by her singing master to be unsuitable for the stage, in part because she has strained her voice singing at an early age, but also because she is unable to represent anything that she does not feel: '[s]he will never be an artist', her singing master tells her father, because 'she has no notion of being anybody but herself' (*Deronda,* p.213). As Mirah later describes it:

> The plays I acted in were detestable to me. Men came about us and wanted to talk to me: women and men seemed to look at me with a sneering smile […] and then see people who came to stare at me behind the scenes. […] But I felt that my voice was getting weaker, and I knew that my acting was not good except for when I was not really acting (*Deronda,* p.217).

Mirah, like Eliot, fears the fate of the 'bad actress' whose 'swaggering gait' reveals her performance to be only a poor imitation or a gross exaggeration ('Woman in France', p.8). Mirah is aware of her limitations as an artist for she, like Caterina and Agnes, can only perform well when she stays within the limits of her 'precious

[131] Voskuil, 'Acting Naturally', p.412.

speciality', when she is 'not really acting' ('Silly Novels', p.162). This is emphasised when Mirah tries to decide how to dress for her first private performance, in which she will perform as Berenice. Freed from the stage, Mirah is able to choose which roles to sing in these private performances, yet when Hans Meyrick suggests that she should not dress like a 'Jewess' because that would limit her repertoire, Mirah responds: 'But it is what I am really. I am not pretending anything. I shall never be anything else' (*Deronda,* p.488). Mirah makes the distinction between reality and theatricality, explaining to Hans that the performance of roles which she feels she understands is 'real', even if it only 'seemed theatrical' (*Deronda,* p.489). As Byerly notes, 'Mirah performs as Berenice only if she is comfortable *being* Berenice'.[132] For Byerly, it is '"insincerity" or fictiveness' in acting, not the performance itself, that Mirah objects to.[133] When performing in these roles, Mirah is able to enhance self-culture, she gains sympathy with her audience, and it is this element that elevates her performance from the realms of economic exchange (the popular) to spiritual exchange (the cultured).

It is Mirah's father, not Mirah herself, who prostitutes her talents as a child for money. Although Mirah did sing 'the greatest music' under her father's instruction, it was not as a means of achieving excellence in her art, but 'for what would fetch the greatest price' (*Deronda*, p. 217). However, needing to earn a living for herself in London, Mirah begins a career as a drawing-room performer. She is still on display in this more private space, as she was on the stage, but Mirah is presented as unaware of her self-display: 'Daniel placed himself where he could see her while she sang, and she took everything as quietly as if she had been a child going to breakfast' (*Deronda*, p.372). It is during this first performance for Daniel that Mirah sings what is most

[132] Byerly, *Realism, Representation, and the Arts*, p.130.
[133] Byerly, *Realism, Representation, and the Arts*, p.131.

precious to her, reciting her mother's Hebrew hymn. This performance 'really seemed childish lisping to her audience; but the voice in which she gave it forth had gathered even a sweeter, more cooing tenderness than was heard in her songs' (*Deronda*, p.374). The description of Mirah singing in the following passage is reminiscent of Hélène Cixous's notion of *écriture féminine*, for Mirah's singing seems to transcend the patriarchal construction of language. Cixous argued that when writing:

> Women must write through their bodies, they must invent the impregnable language that will wreck partitions, classes, and rhetorics, regulations and codes […]. Such is the strength of women that, sweeping away syntax, breaking that famous thread (just a tiny little thread, they say) which acts for men as a surrogate umbilical cord […] women will go right up to the impossible.[134]

Mirah does not 'sing real words – only here and there a syllable like hers – the rest is lisping' (*Deronda*, p.373). Though Daniel is unable to understand the content of her song, he can still appreciate her singing: the narrator describes the 'lisped syllables' as 'very full of meaning' (*Deronda*, p.374). As Byerly notes, even though both Mirah and her audience do not understand the words of the hymn, it nevertheless has a 'profound effect on both her and her audience'.[135] Again, Mirah's singing is figured as a spiritual exchange between herself and her audience, even though she is planning to earn money from her singing. Indeed, Zakreski identifies this scene as the moment in which Mirah is able to 'enter the public sphere while the woman herself remains in the private', for her 'voice momentarily transcends the moral and social conventions associated with the feminised space of the drawing-room'.[136]

It is the element of economic exchange which debases Mirah's earlier performances, and in this she is represented as innocent because she was just a child, first going on stage aged nine. Her performances in England are of a different calibre

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[134] Hélène Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa' in Elaine Marks (ed.), *New French Feminisms* (Brighton: Harvester, 1981), p.245.
[135] Byerly, *Realism, Representation, and the Arts*, p.140.
[136] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.180.

because they are private, and yet these performances also earn her a living. Mirah is open about her motivations for re-starting her singing career, explaining to Daniel that she will be able to 'use it to get [her] bread' and support her brother (*Deronda,* p.373). She is engaged with the marketplace in both cases, as a child on the stage and as an adult in the drawing-room, but it is the perceived protection of the private sphere that saves her from the debased association of the artist selling her art and selling herself. Paradoxically, therefore, the private performance, based in the domestic sphere becomes professional; as Julius Klesmer points out, in London singing in the 'private drawing-room […] is one of the best careers' open to women (*Deronda,* p.485). The drawing room was clearly compatible with the Victorian concept of domesticity as an appropriate space for feminine employment. As both Charlotte Yonge and Florence Marryat were clearly aware, the perception of the private sphere as separate from the public sphere could in fact, paradoxically, enable a very successful professional career.

As Linda Lewis has pointed out, *Daniel Deronda* depicts 'women and artistry in two extremes – the terror of being on display contrasted with the greater terror of being silenced'.[137] If Mirah's terror is the terror of being on display, then the 'greater terror of being silenced' belongs to Daniel's mother, Leonora. She is first mentioned by Daniel's adoptive father, Sir Hugo, early in the novel when Daniel is still unaware of his mother's identity. Ironically (given that Sir Hugo was her lover), he describes the Princess as a 'great singer' whose tragedy was that she married herself 'into silence' (*Deronda,* p.437). Yet, it becomes clear when Daniel meets his mother that marriage did nothing to stop her ambition. Indeed, Leonora's presence is so potent that Daniel becomes emasculated in her company, 'colouring' and blushing 'like a

[137] Lewis, *Germaine de Staël, George Sand the Victorian Woman Artist,* p.177.

girl' (*Deronda*, p.664). Although she makes it clear that Daniel 'was literally traded for an artistic career',[138] Leonora unapologetically demands of her son: '[w]hatever else was wrong, acknowledge that I had a right to be an artist, though my father's will was against it. My nature gave me a charter' (*Deronda*, p.664). It is not a request: it is a demand for her son to 'acknowledge' her 'right' as 'an artist'.

What differentiates Leonora from Eliot's more sympathetic portrayals of Mirah and Caterina is her ambition to fulfil her vocation in public and to pursue her career at any cost, with the implied emphasis on self-display and willing engagement with the economic (as opposed to the spiritual) economy. Furthermore, Leonora forms part of 'the connection George Eliot repeatedly makes between the loss of the maternal self and the nurture of one's genius'.[139] Wanting more for herself than the 'mere' roles of 'daughter and mother', Leonora was clearly fiercely ambitious as a young woman, a quality that she perceives Mirah lacks when Daniel reveals he is in love with a singer (*Deronda*, p.664). As Grace Kehler notes, Eliot seemed to fear 'that the professional woman of rare talent might become obsessed with fame and indifferent to the needs of others', and Leonora's fate of losing her voice and eventually her life, seems to represent that fear. [140] As we have seen, Mirah's voice, which is exhausted from her experience on stage as a child, is later only fit for private performances in drawing rooms, a sphere that safely contains her and retains the reader's sympathy by distancing her from the fierce ambition evident in Daniel's mother.

Leonora's declaration of a woman's right to fulfil her vocation at any cost is echoed by another of Eliot's ambitious heroines, Armgart, who triumphantly proclaims: 'I am an artist by my birth' (*Armgart*, l.379). Written just before

[138] Gallagher, 'George Eliot and *Daniel Deronda*', p.53.
[139] Greenstein, 'The Question of Vocation: From *Romola* to *Middlemarch*', p.503.
[140] Grace Kehler, '*Armgart*'s Voice Problems', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 34 (2006), p.149.

*Middlemarch* in September 1870, *Armgart* was originally published in *Macmillan's Magazine* in July 1871 and was signed 'George Eliot'. Republished in a recent collection of Eliot's shorter and neglected poems, *Armgart* offers an important addition to Eliot's exploration of the female artist-professional. Like Leonora, Armgart is another ambitious singer, a woman who has 'Caesar's ambition in her delicate breast' (*Armgart,* ll.119-120). Like Leonora, she enjoys a hugely successful career on the international stage until her voice fails at the height of her fame, when she also loses her lover, Graf Dornberg. Armgart is particularly vocal about women's right to an artistic profession, both before and after the crisis of losing her voice. The terror of falling into 'the (common) woman's lot', of dwindling from the status of genius into a 'normal' life, is, as Lewis has argued, a central concern in Eliot's portrayal of the female artist, and it is a concern that is strongly emphasised in this poem.[141] Indeed, Armgart's motivation for pursuing a career seems to be fear of living the life of a 'normal' woman:

> I read my lot
> As soberly as if it were a tale
> Writ by a creeping feuilletonist and called
> 'The Woman's Lot: a Tale of Everyday' (*Armgart,* ll.686-689).

It is interesting that in this passage Armgart dismissively refers to the 'creeping feuilletonist' who exploits the 'tale' of woman's everyday 'lot' for his fiction, for this may reflect Eliot's own concerns about serialising her first fiction in *Blackwood's,* particularly as these stories were tales of everyday life.

The construction of Armgart as a professional differs slightly from that of Leonora because despite her obvious revelling in the self-display of her performance, she does not appear to suffer as severely as Daniel's mother. Although Leonora tells her son 'I had a right to be an artist' (*Deronda,* p.664), we never see her at the height

[141] Lewis, *Germaine de Staël, George Eliot, and the Victorian Woman Artist,* p.136.

of her success as we do Armgart, we only see her broken and near death. Part of Armgart's enjoyment, as Gilbert and Gubar have suggested, stems from the fact that 'Armgart recognizes that her art legitimizes her passionate assertions of self that would otherwise be denied her'.[142] Yet her passion is only legitimised as long as the emphasis is on the value of her art, on the pursuit of excellence. Once Armgart's passion leads her to indulge her vanity (as when she adds an extra trill that is not on her musical score) she is duly chastised. In the following passage, her lover Graf Dornberg juxtaposes her vanity with her training:

> […] I thought you meant
> To be an artist – lift your audience
> To see your vision, not trick forth a show
> To please the grossest taste of grossest numbers (*Armgart*, ll.85-88).

In this passage, Dornberg emphasises that the purpose of the artist is to refine her audience, to 'lift [her] audience', and to resist the temptation to appease her vanity and the masses, the 'grossest numbers' with their 'grossest taste'. Once the artist begins to indulge her vanity, like Caterina, she becomes associated with the crude stage performer who sells herself as well as her art.

Although we do not see her physically deteriorate as we do Daniel's mother, Armgart's voice does fail her and she is silenced, like Caterina. She repeatedly rejects Dornberg's proposals of marriage, explaining that she could not stand to be 'warbling in a drawing-room' nor be satisfied to '[s]ing in the chimney-corner to inspire / My husband reading the news' (*Armgart,* ll.372-373). Unlike Mirah, Armgart cannot envisage continuing her career in the private sphere; for her, wife and worker are not compatible concepts. In this sense, Armgart refuses to pose as an amateur. In Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, Aurora's suitor 'learns before his

[142] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p.453.

marriage to accept his wife's art', but this is not the case for Eliot's heroine: for Armgart 'there is never any happy conjunction for women of the love plot and the plot of artist aspiration'.[143] The loss of her voice, the one talent that distinguished Armgart from 'ordinary' women, proves the reason that Armgart is unable to refuse an otherwise suitable marriage, transforming her from an exceptional woman to a 'common' one: 'Russet and songless as a missel-thrush. / An ordinary girl – a plain brown girl' (*Armgart*, l.686). The description of a 'russet' bird echoes the earlier description of Caterina, who is instructed by Sir Christopher not to dress in russet for she is not, at that point, a 'songless' bird. Although robbed of her voice, Armgart is not completely silenced for she resolves to teach others, to pass on her 'gift' to 'others who can use it for delight' (*Armgart,* l.1887). So, Armgart remains within the marketplace to a certain extent, though she loses her power to perform.

Between the extremes of the egoism and ambition of Armgart and Leonora and the reluctance and altruism of Caterina and Mirah, is Gwendolen Harleth. Gwendolen's entirely negative experience of attempting to turn art into money further emphasises Eliot's discomfort with ambition and egoism: as Susan Colón notes, it is no coincidence that Gwendolen's 'most salient characteristics' are 'egoism and amateurism'.[144] It is her vanity that largely prevents her professionalism. Early in the novel, while casting about for a vocation, Gwendolen considers authorship, telling Mrs Arrowpoint (who produces 'home-made books' which are not published): 'I would give anything to write a book!' (*Deronda,* p.46). Authorship is also a career that Sir Hugo considers for Daniel, telling him: 'You might make yourself a barrister – be a writer – take up politics' (*Deronda,* p.176). However, both Daniel and Gwendolen reject this career, the narrator wryly explaining that it is 'a vocation which

[143] Brady, *George Eliot*, p.157.
[144] Colón, '"One Function in Particular"', p.299.

is understood to turn foolish thinking into funds' (*Deronda,* p.185). Authorship having never been a serious consideration for Gwendolen, she settles on becoming a performer, like Mirah. Her motivations, however, are economic and egoistic, and this is why Gwendolen fails in her attempt to become a professional. Singing is simply not an artistic vocation for Gwendolen; she is not interested in the pursuit of excellence, merely in performing as a means to an end: 'It will be easier than the dead level of being a governess', she tells the disapproving Julius Klesmer (*Deronda,* p.255).

Gwendolen's amateur performances in the drawing-room are limited to the 'popular' songs which she later wryly describes as being indicative of her 'puerile state of culture' (*Deronda,* p.50). Ironically, however, she does achieve something of the Lewesian ideal of 'natural acting', when she forgets to act and portrays a genuine emotion: fear. The *tableau vivant*, as Lynn Voskuil notes, was popular at mid-century as 'a mode of domesticated theatre that allowed its genteel participants and spectators to play at theatre and to avoid sullying contact with the demi-monde in the professional theatre world'.[145] The tableau based on *The Winter's Tale* which Gwendolen performs in the role of Hermione in front of a domestic audience (including Klesmer) 'showed [her] in an unforeseen phase of emotion' when, surprised by the sudden revelation of a sinister portrait during the performance, Gwendolen's feeling infuses her performance and has the effect of producing 'a change of expression that was terrifying in its terror. She looked like a statue into which a soul of Fear had entered' (*Deronda,* p.61). Like Mirah, who claims that she does not 'pretend' when she performs at her best, Gwendolen shows a glimpse of artistic talent, within Klesmer's (and Eliot's) ideal, when she involuntarily gives up pretence and expresses her true emotions. As Voskuil notes, for a moment Gwendolen

[145] Lynn M. Voskuil, *Acting Naturally: Victorian Theatricality and Authenticity* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2004), p.108.

'acts naturally'.[146] This episode illustrates that, for Eliot, 'feeling has the power to authenticate theatricality'.[147]

So, although she is described as being 'highly successful as a drawing-room amateur', Gwendolen's mistake is that 'she thinks of the artistic vocation as a capitalistic undertaking'.[148] She jokingly refers to her own 'poor amateur singing', but Gwendolen fully believes that she can become a professional, that she has a talent that can be turned into an income (*Deronda,* p.48). What she misunderstands is that she must put aside thoughts of 'riches' in order to become a true professional.[149] As the instructor of Catherine Arrowpoint, Mirah and Gwendolen, Julius Klesmer is 'the novel's explicit example of a pure and authentic artist', and it is Klesmer who shows Gwendolen the extent of her mistake.[150] Indeed, Jennifer Uglow has described Gwendolen as being 'warned off from the artist's life with the same sort of vehemence George Eliot had used thirty years before when she railed against amateur, second-rate writers […] in "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists."'[151] As such, Klesmer serves as the 'mouthpiece for the high callings of artistry and the artist, and to dash the artistic hopes of [Gwendolen]'.[152] As he explains to Gwendolen, 'the honour comes from the inward vocation and the hard-won achievement: there is no honour in donning the life as a livery' (*Deronda,* p.255). In other words, there is 'no honour' in dressing your manuscript up in ribbons, as Agnes does, or in using your singing to beat a rival, as Caterina. Such 'livery' demeans art, which should be an 'inward vocation'. Importantly, Byerly points out that this 'highly professional view of music

[146] Voskuil, *Acting Naturally,* p.107.
[147] Voskuil, *Acting Naturally,* p.125.
[148] Colón, '"One Function in Particular"', p.300.
[149] Eliot, 'Authorship', p.179.
[150] Gallagher, 'George Eliot and *Daniel Deronda*', p.54.
[151] Uglow, *George Eliot*, p.234.
[152] Lewis, *Germaine de Staël, George Eliot, and the Victorian Woman Artist,* p.177.

was new in England'.[153] Music as a career was slow to develop for, like authorship, it was becoming professionalised during the 1870s and 1880s, with the establishment of official bodies like the Incorporated Society of Music, from which amateurs like Gwendolen were being edged out.[154]

The case that Klesmer puts to Gwendolen is not that she cannot act, for he recognises that she can perform well enough at home in amateur performances, but that she cannot achieve excellence without vigorous training and hard work. And for Klesmer, there is little point in the artist attempting a career if she does not consistently push herself to perform at the highest level, if she does not pursue excellence. As Colón writes, he 'explains the professional scene to Gwendolen in terms of two choices: "higher" vocation – the single-minded pursuit of excellence in art – and "lower" profession – the self-interested attainment of a level of proficiency that brings capitalistic profit'.[155] In presuming that Gwendolen's aim is for the 'higher vocation', he instructs her to 'look only at excellence', adding that she 'would of course earn nothing' (*Deronda*, p.256). Furthermore, Klesmer implies that as a popular artist, Gwendolen would face things which would compromise her position as a lady (the things that Caterina faced as a child). Klesmer's final judgement links the heroine uncomfortably close to the trope of performer as prostitute:

> I was speaking of what you would have to go through if you aimed at becoming a real artist – if you took music and the drama as a higher vocation in which you would strive after excellence. […] But – there are certainly other ideas, other dispositions with which a young lady may take up an art that will bring her before the public. […] She may desire to exhibit herself to an admiration which dispenses with skill. […] we have here nothing to do with art. The woman who takes up this career is not an artist: she is usually one who thinks of entering on a luxurious life by a short and easy road (*Deronda*, pp.259-260).

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[153] Byerly, *Realism, Representation, and the Arts*, p.143.
[154] Byerly, *Realism, Representation, and the Arts*, p.107.
[155] Colón, '"One Function in Particular"', p.300.

This is the distinction that Eliot presented to her readers in 1856 in 'Silly Novels by Lady Novelists': the artist-professional who aims for excellence (which she defined in terms of literary realism) or the amateur who wrote for money and vanity, those who sought 'luxury through ease' and avoided the hard work inherent in the striving to achieve professionalism. Gwendolen's dilemma, as she desperately needs money to support herself and her widowed mother, is one that many women – including Florence Marryat – faced. In aiming for the 'higher vocation', they might well have failed, as Oliphant failed to secure that elusive editorship of a prestigious magazine; in writing what sold well, popular authors could support themselves and their families but risked their work being demeaned as 'low art'.

Gwendolen's dilemma is similar to that of the ambitious heroine of Charlotte Yonge's *The Clever Woman of the Family* (1865) who seeks an artistic career for material gain, as well as to appease her vanity. It is no coincidence that both women fail in their attempt to negotiate a professional career for themselves for these very reasons. In both Yonge and Eliot's novels, the fate of the ambitious woman serves as a warning to others. Eliot's early fiction warned of the dangers of self-display in a way that anticipated both *Armgart* and *Daniel Deronda*, in which open ambition and a sustained presence on the public stage are shown to be highly damaging to women. In Oliphant's *The Three Athelings*, the heroine's art is shown to be refining, and her desire for self-display is under control so that she can enjoy professional success. Likewise, Mirah achieves the same reconciliation, and so is the only character in Eliot's fiction who achieves a successful career that does not damage her in the way it does others. As we have seen, throughout her career, in journalism or fiction, Eliot strove to describe an ideal of the female artist-professional, a woman who managed to reconcile the value placed on art as a moral vocation with the necessity of earning a

living by that vocation. For Mirah, for Klesmer, and for Eliot, in order to reconcile these two demands, the public sphere needed not to be 'defined economically, but rather as a sphere of moral virtue and high culture'.[156]

**Conclusion**

In the summer of 1859, between the publication of *Adam Bede* and *The Mill on the Floss*, Eliot's identity was revealed. Under pressure from Joseph Liggins's claim that he had written *Adam Bede*, and the threat of an unauthorised sequel called *Adam Bede Jnr*, Eliot was forced to reveal herself to her publisher and the public. She needed the protection of her pseudonym more than ever at this stage in her career. As Ruby Redinger has pointed out 'no one would buy the books of the scandalous Marian Evans'.[157] Eliot's insistence on being called 'Lewes' reveals her need for the protection of the *coverture* offered by marriage, and her vulnerability as a *feme sole*, a position which, as Clare Pettit points out, would have further undermined her authority.[158] This crisis in Eliot's career also coincided with increasing calls for signature in the periodical press. Pettit has commented upon 'the widespread use of male pseudonyms after 1860 for women writers', suggesting that 'this may represent a response to the rise of a more professionalized, and more "masculine", public culture of letters in this period'.[159] The *Critic,* for example, wrote that 'anonymous authorship is really opposed, not only to the letter of the law, but to the moral good of society'.[160] As we have seen, the 'moral good of society' was central to Eliot's conception of professionalism, based as it was upon the notion of woman as a conduit for culture and morality, her work forming a kind of public service.

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[156] Pettit, *Patent Inventions,* p.242.
[157] Redinger, *George Eliot,* p.5.
[158] Pettit, *Patent Inventions,* p.242.
[159] Pettit, *Patent Inventions,* pp.209-210.
[160] [Anonymous], 'Sayings and Doings', *The Critic* (23 April 1859), p.387.

Yet, even when her identity became widely known, Eliot continued to use her male pseudonym, even in her private correspondence. For example, Lewes wrote to Blackwood: 'G. E. is very uncomfortable […]. He thinks – and I agree with him – that *mystery* as to authorship will have a great effect in determining critical opinion'.[161] Oddly, given that Blackwood now knew her real identity, Lewes continued to refer to Eliot as 'he'. Eliot's thoughts on the matter help to explain this choice:

> when a *name* is precisely the highest-priced thing in literature, any one who has a name will not, except when there is some strong motive for mystification, throw away the advantages of that name. I wrote anonymously while I was an unknown author, but I shall never, I believe, write anonymously again (*GEL*: IV: 25-26).

'George Eliot' now had cultural currency as the respected author of the hugely successful *Adam Bede.* As such, 'George Eliot' was an author who was able to command an unprecedented fee from publishers competing for the next big novel.[162] No wonder, then, that Lewes continued to refer to 'George Eliot' in his correspondence: as Eliot's letter makes clear, she had earned that highly-priced name.

Eliot was heavily criticised in the press for having adopted a pseudonym, with some journals suggesting that she had somehow deceived her public. The *Athenaeum*, for example, referred to it as a '*ruse*' and accused her of attempting to 'mystify the reading public'.[163] Elaine Showalter has revealed the extent of the critical double standard once Eliot's identity was revealed, with some journals even re-reviewing novels in the light of Eliot's newly discovered identity. Reflecting on *Adam Bede*, and now aware of the sex of the author, the *Saturday Review* ruefully admitted that it was 'generally accepted as the work of a man' because 'it was thought to be too good for a

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[161] Cited in Gordon S. Haight, *George Eliot: a Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p.286.
[162] For more on what turned out to be Eliot's unsuccessful relationship with the *Cornhill*, see Caroline Levine and Mark W. Turner (eds), *From Author to Text: Re-reading George Eliot's Romola* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).
[163] [Anonymous], 'The Weekly Gossip', *Athenaeum* (2 July 1859), p.20.

woman's story'.[164] The *Athenaeum* wrote of the same novel: 'The writer is in no sense a great unknown; the tale, if bright in parts, and such as a clever woman with an observant eye and unschooled moral nature might have written, has no great quality of any kind'.[165] As she had feared (but also ironically in the context of her practice of reviewing women as a group in 'Silly Novels'), her fiction was now grouped together with that of other female authors. From this new perspective, critics 'constantly evaluated' Eliot's work 'in terms of its fidelity (or not) to "female" or "feminine" qualities. She [was] praised and blamed for writing like a woman – and for writing like a man'.[166]

As Alexis Easley has pointed out, the retention of her pseudonym caused significant confusion amongst reviewers.[167] Indeed, Easley convincingly argues that by continuing to practise pseudonymity, though her identity was known, Eliot was able to deliberately blur gender lines, helping to retain her hard-won position as a respected novelist. Like Lewes in his correspondence to Blackwood, the *Edinburgh Review* continued to refer to Eliot as 'he', but also applied the critical double standard by grouping Eliot's fiction with the work of other women writers like Elizabeth Gaskell, Harriet Martineau and Mary Mitford: Eliot's work was now read as women's fiction and was praised, or denigrated, within those terms.[168] Reviewers for *The Times* referred to Eliot by the feminine pronoun but put her name in quotation marks. Dinah Mulock Craik, writing for *Macmillan's Magazine*, also put Eliot's name in quotation marks but referred to her as 'he', writing: 'we prefer to respect the pseudonym'.[169] So,

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[164] [Anonymous], 'Literature', *Saturday Review* (14 April 1860), p.470.
[165] Cited in Showalter, *A Literature of their Own*, p.95.
[166] David, *Intellectual Women and Victorian Patriarchy*, p.165.
[167] Easley, 'Authorship, Gender and Identity', p.148.
[168] Tuchman and Fortin, *Edging Women Out*, p.186.
[169] Cited in Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, p.129.

even while reviewers were 'respecting' Eliot's pseudonymity, they were still highlighting her difference by putting her name in quotation marks.

I began this chapter with an examination of Eliot's 'self-created Self' and have ended it by returning to this persona. In her first professional role, Eliot's identity was, by necessity, 'invisible' but she nevertheless constructed a persona through her personal correspondence, describing interactions with her contributors and insisting on her commitment to the magazine. She then used her position as a journalist to describe an ideal model of women's literary professionalism. This ideal was repeatedly explored in her fiction, as Eliot teased out the complexities and difficulties of her own notion of professionalism, based as it was on an ideal of enhancing self-culture and controlling self-display. In the next chapter, I move on to consider how Eliot's ideal was echoed by a woman writing for a very different market. Although they were not personally known to each other, Charlotte Yonge shared Eliot's view of women's professionalism (as her comments in *Womankind* indicate). It is to the development of Charlotte Yonge's editorial identity as Mother Goose, and her exploration of the woman artist-professional in her fiction, that I now turn.

## Chapter Two: Charlotte Yonge

> If you sacrifice your womanly nature in the attempt at the world's notion of manly dash, you only sacrifice yourself, and mar the performance ('Authorship', p.185).

So Charlotte Yonge advised her readers in an article on authorship first published in *The Monthly Packet*. Her comments are revealing for they suggest that Yonge, like George Eliot, did not so much object to the performance inherent in professional life, but rather to the open expression of ambition that drives performance. At times, however, Yonge also seemed deeply uncomfortable with the notion of performance and ambivalent toward public life. For Yonge, as for Eliot, ambition endangers femininity; it may lead a woman to 'sacrifice' her 'womanly nature'. We saw in the previous chapter that Eliot defined women's professionalism through an emphasis on the artist engaged in a refining work (art as a medium for morality) rather than market economy (art and artist as a product exchanged for money). Within this framework, the woman artist-professional achieves excellence through effort and study and it was on this basis Eliot came to define herself as a cultured woman writer and literary sage. Despite their differences as authors and editors, Yonge negotiated her public persona within the same terms as Eliot, defining herself as a facilitator for moral growth and her motivations as altruistic. However, Yonge's morality was informed by her Tractarianism, not secularism like Eliot's, and so she described herself as 'a sort of instrument for popularizing Church views'.[1] As Valerie Sanders has suggested, women like Yonge who were writing in the latter half of the nineteenth century 'needed to come to terms with their literary foremothers', of which George Eliot was one (though, as we have seen, Eliot and Yonge began their editorial careers at the

[1] Romanes, *Charlotte Mary Yonge*, p.190.

same time).[2] However, like some of the other anti-feminist writers discussed by Sanders, Yonge 'felt [she] could see through [Eliot's] façade of greatness', and saw Eliot's lack of religious faith as her greatest flaw as a novelist.[3]

Yonge's construction of her authorial persona shared much in common with Florence Marryat, as well as George Eliot. Both Yonge and Marryat began their literary careers by defining themselves as dutiful daughters. Yonge emphasised her subservience to her father, William Yonge, and her spiritual mentor, the Reverend John Keble, as well as the compatibility of her career with Victorian ideals of domesticity, working at home and publishing for the benefit of charity, while also being dependent upon her father's advice and guidance. Unlike Eliot, who never posed as an amateur, Yonge found it useful to continue to present her professional identity within these domesticated and amateur terms. Whilst she did not hide her success as such, Yonge nevertheless continued to emphasise her charitable work and her dependence on her father. Unlike Eliot, who needed the anonymity offered by the *Westminster Review*, Yonge did not need to mask her gender. Indeed, the market for which Yonge was writing (popular domestic novels and fiction for juvenile readers) was 'traditionally associated with the feminine'.[4] When Yonge took on the role of mentor to the Goslings in the 1860s, she found it useful to adopt the persona of Mother Goose (largely through the illustrations of the small privately circulated magazine, *The Barnacle*), a persona that was particularly suited to her new role. The character of Mother Goose complemented those of 'Aunt Charlotte' and 'Cousin Charlotte', labels which she occasionally used for the publication of her historical

[2] Sanders, *Eve's Renegades*, p.39.
[3] Sanders, *Eve's Renegades*, p.39.
[4] Sturrock, 'Literary Women of the 1850s', p.122.

non-fiction.[5] Her creation of these professional personas echoes George Eliot's practice of constructing a 'self-created Self', and the character of Mother Goose


**Figure 2.a. [Anonymous], *The Barnacle*, vol. 7 (June 1865).**

offered a homely and domestic persona, indicating that Yonge's particular brand of professionalism was defined by paid work conducted at home, justified by emphasising woman's centrality within the domestic sphere.[6]

However, *The Barnacle* was aimed at young women ambitious for a literary career, and the illustrations within it figured Yonge not as the traditionally comical Mother Goose, but rather as a 'fairy-tale woman writer'.[7] In other words, Yonge's

[5] Such as *Aunt Charlotte's Stories of English History for the Little Ones* (1873), part of a series which also included German, Roman, French, Greek and Bible history, *Aunt Charlotte's Scripture Readings* (1876) and *Aunt Charlotte's Evenings at Home with the Poets: a Collection of Poems for the Young, with Conversations, Arranged in Twenty-Five Evenings* (1881).
[6] Lynn Linton, *My Literary Life*, p.99.
[7] Laurence Talairach-Vielmas, *Moulding the Female Body in Victorian Fairy Tales and Sensation Novels* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p.18.

Mother Goose came to symbolise the successful woman writer and the position to which her contributors were aspiring. Like Marryat in the illustrations of *London Society*, Yonge was often depicted as working in the home, indicating that the home was a particularly conducive space in which women could successfully operate as professionals. In one illustration, for example, Yonge is shown to be leaning out of the garden of 'The Editor's Office', receiving manuscripts delivered from all over the country via horse and cart (see figure 2.a). Yonge was also associated in the illustrations with the feminine role of child-rearing, to be seen in one whipping her young contributors into shape (see figure 2.c). In almost every illustration, Yonge is figured as powerful, but her power is usually presented in domestic terms, limiting her to the home that she is rarely seen to step out of. Yonge's Mother Goose can therefore be seen to be conforming to, as well as exploiting, Victorian domestic ideology.[8] So, she is empowered, as in figure 2.a, where she appears to command the manuscripts which arrive from all over the country and pile up at her door, but only within the confines of the home. She appears to be straining to leave her garden, her arms outstretched over the wall, but she is unable or unwilling to do so.

The point of my discussion in this chapter is to suggest that far from being 'anxious' about 'adopting the persona of a professional woman', as June Sturrock has suggested, these illustrations suggest a playful response to the process of negotiating a

[8] Johnston and Fraser, 'The Professionalization of Women's Writing', p.231.

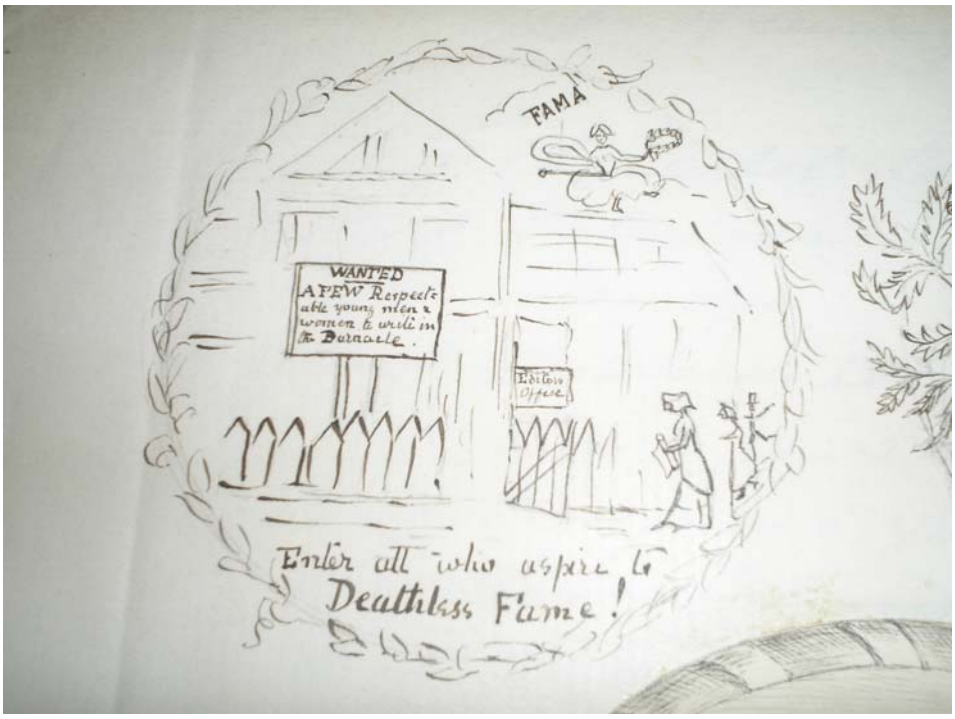


**Figure 2.b. [Anonymous], [Opening Illustration], *The Barnacle*, vol. 4 (June 1864).**

professional identity.[9] Yonge's correspondence does not reveal the extent of control she had over these illustrations (if she had any involvement in their design at all), nor the identity of the illustrator, though the most distinctive of the illustrations (most of which are included in this chapter) often carry the initials 'A. M .C'., indicating that they may have been drawn by Yonge's goddaughter, Alice Mary Coleridge (1846–1907), who was thirteen at the time of the Gosling society and used the pen name of 'Gargoyle'. This gap in our knowledge as to who illustrated *The Barnacle* does not detract from the fact that the representation of Yonge in her professional role suggests that she created an environment in which the working woman was very visible, in which ambition and power were celebrated in a way that is not evident in *The Monthly Packet*. I will return to the notion of ambition later, but it is worth noting here that it was the subject of many illustrations. The opening illustration for the first

[9] Sturrock, 'Establishing Identity', p.267.

number (see figure 2.b above) is a sketch entitled: 'Enter all who aspire to Deathless Fame!' Two figures in dresses, manuscripts in hand, approach the 'Editor's Office', above which hovers the angel of 'FAMA' ('Fame') and a sign that reads: 'WANTED: A few respectable young men and women to write in the Barnacle'.[10] Though the sign requests men, it is notable that only ambitious women writers are depicted.

Grounding my discussion of Yonge's negotiation of her professional identity within the context of her appropriation of Mother Goose, the second part of this chapter goes on to discuss how she represented the woman artist-professional in her fiction. Examining literary women in *The Daisy Chain, or Aspirations* (1856), *Dynevor Terrace* (1857) and *The Clever Woman of the Family* (1865), I suggest that Yonge placed greater emphasis than Eliot or Marryat on the usefulness of posing as an amateur, reflecting her own career. In *The Clever Woman*, for example, Yonge contrasts the tactics of two women who are ambitious for literary careers, one who wishes to 'set herself up as an authoress' and fails, and another who secretly writes at home and is promoted from journalist to editor.[11] As will become evident in the pages that follow, in her role of mentor through *The Barnacle*, Yonge encouraged the ambition of her contributors. However, like Eliot, her fiction tends to teach women that posing as an amateur could be a useful tactic, as could framing their ambition in domestic and religious terms, just as Yonge had done in throughout her career in order to present her work as a refining and spiritual product, downplaying (but not avoiding) engagement with the marketplace.

Yonge's novels share with Eliot's and Marryat's a concern over how women juggle the demands of domestic duty and professional work once married. As we have

[10] [Anonymous], [Opening Illustration], *The Barnacle*, vol. 4 (June 1874), [no page number given]. Manuscript held at the Lady Margaret Hall Library, Oxford.
[11] Charlotte Yonge, *The Clever Woman of the Family*, ed. Clare Simmons (Ontario, Canada: Broadview, 2001), p.175. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

seen, Eliot tended to silence her ambitious heroines. Yonge's solution, however, is often for her heroines to remain unmarried, and thus the role of dutiful daughter is not usurped by the roles of wife and mother, both of which are often disastrous to the mental and physical health of Yonge's female characters. As Sanders notes: 'marriage may mature and feminize women, but singleness remains the higher option, nobler because it avoids active sexuality'.[12] Despite this, Yonge often seemed 'perplexed about the alternative' to marriage, for those women who remain single often feel alone and unfulfilled.[13] Those who do marry, however, must learn that wifehood is a profession in itself, and one that often (but not always) leaves no room for authorship. So, like Eliot, Yonge engaged with women's need for work in her fiction, both financially and spiritually, but she did not celebrate women's work in her fiction as she did in *The Barnacle*, or in the way that Florence Marryat did in her work.

Yonge was, like Marryat, attempting to position the woman artist as professional by exploiting the Victorian notion of domesticity as woman's special sphere of influence. They shared the idea that women could be successful professionals because of their domesticity, not in spite of it. In her fiction, Yonge explored how conducive the home was for women as a space for paid work (as she herself had found it to be) and further, how women could successfully negotiate a professional identity for themselves within the confines of domesticity. However, of the three women included in this study, Yonge was the most uncomfortable with the notion of performance and ambition, even though she recognised that performance was an essential element of professionalism (as the epigraph for this chapter suggests). We have seen that Eliot's fiction presented readers with a warning to those who do not learn to balance their ambition with a sense of duty. In Chapter Three, we

[12] Sanders, *Eve's Renegades*, p.66.
[13] Sanders, 'Marriage and the antifeminist woman novelist', p.30.

shall see that Florence Marryat celebrated women's ambition, while also stressing the pursuit of excellence as central to professionalism. In this chapter, we shall see that Yonge's concern over ambition was even greater than Eliot's, for her novels often present heroines who struggle to control their desire for work and dissatisfaction with the roles of daughter, wife, and mother. These heroines suffer greatly until they learn to conform to suitable domestic roles. This does not, however, always mean that their professional lives cease once their married lives begin, for Yonge's novels, like Marryat's, often describe scenarios in which women can play both roles of worker and wife, a possibility that Eliot seemed unable or unwilling to depict in her fiction.

**Dutiful Daughters**

In her 'Introductory Letter' to the first number of *The Monthly Packet*, Yonge wrote that the aim of her magazine was to encourage her readers to be 'more steadfast and dutiful daughters to our own beloved Catholic Church of England'.[14] As June Sturrock has noted, Yonge 'identified herself strongly as her father's daughter' (as Florence Marryat did), yet she also 'saw herself and projected herself as "a daughter of the church."'[15] Herein lies the complexity of Yonge's professional identity: the concept of duty was paramount (as it was for Eliot), but duty to the Church allowed Yonge, and others like her, the possibility of justifying professional work and ambition through the acceptable medium of the church, something that Yonge described as 'meritorious action through the aid of the Holy Spirit' (*Womankind*, p.214). Yonge wrote that '[i]t is only as a daughter of the Church that woman can have her place, or be satisfied as to her vocation' (*Womankind*, p.213). So, women could legitimately pursue a vocation, as long as that vocation was perceived to be useful to the church. Tractarianism, as Sturrock has discussed, was particularly

[14] Yonge, 'Introductory Letter', p.1.
[15] Sturrock, "*Heaven and Home*", p.16.

compatible with women's work for 'despite their principled traditionalism and hostility to all causes associated with liberalism, [the Tractarians] took the question of women's work very seriously, largely because of their belief in the spiritual importance of good works as well as faith'.[16]

As well as being infused with her religious belief, Yonge's concept of professionalism was also informed by her sense of familial duty. Critics often comment upon Yonge's fear of her father, noting that her father and the Reverend John Keble were by far the most dominating influences of her life and career; Dorothy Mermin, for example, claims that 'Yonge's novels were an important part of the Oxford Movement's propaganda efforts, read and approved by its leader, John Keble; her father would not have allowed her to publish otherwise', but this statement needs qualifying.[17] In a much-cited passage from 'Lifelong Friends', first published in *The Monthly Packet* in 1894, Yonge recalled that before the publication of her first novel, her father gravely put it to her that 'there were three reasons for which one might desire to publish—love of vanity, or of gain, or the wish to do good'.[18] On being asked what her motivations were, Yonge 'answered, with tears, that [she] really hoped [she] had written with the purpose of being useful to young girls like [her]self'.[19] Yonge thus represented herself to her readers as a dutiful daughter, frightened by her father's lecture on the evils of ambition and motivated by altruism. Indeed, she insisted that 'for a long time it seemed a point of honour, and perhaps of duty', not to spend any of her profits on herself.[20] So, as Leslee Thorne-Murphy has suggested,

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[16] Sturrock, *"Heaven and Home"*, p.49.
[17] Dorothy Mermin, *Godiva's Ride: Women of Letters in England, 1830–1880* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), p.109.
[18] Charlotte Yonge, 'Lifelong Friends', in Battiscombe and Laski (eds), *A Chaplet for Charlotte Yonge*, p.181.
[19] Yonge, 'Lifelong Friends', p.181.
[20] Yonge, 'Lifelong Friends', p.181.

Yonge eschewed 'monetary gain and fame, [and] set out to brave the world of publishing for altruistic motives'.[21]

Like Eliot's 'How I Came to Write Fiction', Yonge clearly saw this article as an opportunity to shape her readers' understanding of her as a professional artist, and began with the question: 'When did I begin story weaving?'[22] Just as Marryat employed the image of the novelist unravelling plots and knitting socks and Margaret Oliphant likened writing to making a shirt, so Yonge used domestic hobbycraft as a metaphor for writing, further domesticating her professional identity: 'story weaving' conjures the image of novels woven like an item of clothing, rather than written out on an office desk. Yonge therefore presented her authorship as a hobby, writing vaguely of her 'dreams of romance', just as Eliot had described her writing as a 'dream'.[23] She wrote that her first novel, *Château de Melville*, was written when she was fifteen for sale at a charity bazaar with the purpose of raising money for the building of a school, just as her heroine Ethel May in *The Daisy Chain* plans to publish in order to build a new church. So, although Yonge acknowledged herself as a professional here (she sells her work), she frames economic exchange in spiritual terms. The book was written for altruistic purposes and Yonge apologises for selling it, writing that it 'sold at what I fear was an extortionate price'.[24] Thus, she defined her professionalism by domesticity, charity and family, though of course the amateurism implied here was 'assumed rather than actual'.[25]

Elaine Showalter has argued that Yonge fully internalised her father's patriarchal views of literature, claiming that by 'doing good and taking no pay

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[21] Leslee Thorne-Murphy, 'The Charity Bazaar and Women's Professionalization in Charlotte Mary Yonge's *The Daisy Chain*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 47, no. 4 (2007), p.883.
[22] Yonge, 'Lifelong Friends', p.181.
[23] See Chapter One. Yonge, 'Lifelong Friends', p.182.
[24] Yonge, 'Lifelong Friends', p.182.
[25] Sturrock, 'Establishing Identity', p.272.

[Yonge] was safely confined in a female and subordinate role within the family, and remained dependent upon her father'.[26] But, as Showalter notes, Yonge was not confined or dependent: she requested reviews of her work from her publishers (good and bad) and wrote 'detailed, firm, and extremely businesslike letters to Macmillan about sales and publishing'.[27] She was also financially independent, liquidising her assets in order to provide her brother Julian with financial support in 1875.[28] So, Yonge's representation of herself as a dutiful daughter was, like Eliot's representation of herself through her private correspondence, a construction.

Although the identity of a 'daughter of the Church' implies female subordination within the rigid patriarchal hierarchy of institutional religion, this belies the fact that religion often 'offered alternative networks to women who were excluded from the clubland where male authors and editors made their contacts'.[29] We have already seen that Tractarianism was conducive to women's work, but Yonge's success also relied heavily on the 'alternative networks' that Elisabeth Jay describes. As I mentioned in the Introduction, although Yonge turned to her father and John Keble for literary advice, it was in fact the contacts of her mother and aunts in the female network of friends and family which led to her assuming her editorial role, and in turn through which she herself helped other young women starting out in their careers (through the Gosling society). Nicola Diane Thompson claims that Yonge was 'extremely dependent on her father and John Keble for editing and approving her work',[30] yet correspondence shows that it was her mother who most often acted as

[26] Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own,* p.57.
[27] Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own,* p.57.
[28] Georgina Battiscombe, *Charlotte Mary Yonge, the Story of an Uneventful Life* (London: Constable, 1943), p.151.
[29] Jay, 'Women Writers and Religion', p.260.
[30] Thompson, *Reviewing Sex*, p.141.

reader and editor, as she wrote to one friend: 'We never tire of talking of them [her books] before they are written and correcting the MS and the proofs'.[31]

Christabel Coleridge described how *The Heir of Redclyffe*, Yonge's most successful novel, was given the final approval by her father, but had first 'run the gauntlet of that private public' of the Dysons, the Coleridges, and the Kebles.[32] Marianne Dyson, Yonge's literary mentor and lifelong friend whom she claimed gave her the idea for *The Heir of Redcylffe*, was the first person to read and approve it, with Keble only seeing it 'afterwards'.[33] Importantly, Coleridge noted, Yonge 'accepted all this advice […] with deference and gratitude, but she took none of it'.[34] This is important for two reasons: firstly, Coleridge suggests that the editing of Yonge's novels involved the entire family and their circle of friends (a real 'home industry', as June Sturrock has called it), not just her father and Keble, as was the perception that Yonge had encouraged.[35] Secondly, Coleridge suggests that Yonge was careful to appear to be taking the advice of her elders, particularly her male elders, while at the same time disregarding it. Clearly, the dutiful daughter was a persona that was useful within the context of Yonge's 'private public' as well as her reading public.

Beginning her career at the same time as George Eliot in the 1850s, when anonymity was common for writers, Yonge initially did not publish her name on the front covers of *The Heir of Redclyffe*. Despite this, as Thompson has noted, reviewers assumed that it was written by a woman because it was 'was seen as intrinsically and delightfully consistent with reviewers' assumptions about appropriate feminine writing'.[36] Indeed, *The Heir of Redclyffe* 'established a pattern of endurance, self-

[31] Mare and Percival, *Victorian Best-Seller*, p.20.
[32] Coleridge, *Charlotte Mary Yonge*, p.166.
[33] Coleridge, *Charlotte Mary Yonge*, p.166.
[34] Coleridge, *Charlotte Mary Yonge*, p.166.
[35] Sturrock, 'Establishing Identity', p.273.
[36] Thompson, *Reviewing Sex*, p.89.

sacrifice, duty, and honesty' that came to typify the popular domestic novel.[37] As signature became the preferred practice and Yonge grew in popularity, she began to sign her name whilst continuing to develop a persona that was 'self-effacing', defined by being 'humble, demure, religiously rather than commercially motivated'.[38] The proceeds from the sales of *The Heir of Redclyffe* and *The Daisy Chain* were donated to build a mission ship and school.[39] Commenting on this, Thompson suggests that:

> the almost exclusively domestic settings of her books, and her habit of donating all monetary proceeds of the book to charity were amongst the elements that made her appear to conform closely to the Victorian notion of ideal femininity. […] Yonge's literary persona coincided closely with this idealized view of womanhood.[40]

For Thompson, Yonge (whom she appropriately labels the 'Angel in the Circulating Library'), 'triumphs through her apparent lack of self-interest and ambition'.[41] It was, of course, only an *apparent* lack of self-interest and ambition, for her success enabled Yonge to stay financially independent and support her family when she needed to.

The distinction between writing in private and for publication was for Yonge, as it was for Eliot, important to her concept of the woman artist. Yonge wrote that if her father had tried to stop her publishing, she 'must have written, but […] should never have published, at least not for many years'.[42] So, she stressed that her dominant father would not have stopped her expressing herself artistically in private, but his disapproval would have initially stopped her selling her work ('for many years' implies that Yonge would have begun publishing only after her father's death). I have already discussed Yonge's thoughts on the dangers of publication in Chapter One, but it is worth mentioning here that she also explored this issue in her fiction. In *Two Sides of the Shield* (1885), Dolores Mohun, who lives with her aunt, becomes

[37] Fryckstedt, 'Defining the Domestic Genre', p.20.
[38] Thompson, *Reviewing Sex*, p.141.
[39] Coleridge, *Charlotte Mary Yonge*, p.206 and p.210.
[40] Thompson, *Reviewing Sex*, p.89.
[41] Thompson, *Reviewing Sex*, p.100.
[42] Coleridge, *Charlotte Mary Yonge*, p.153.

rebellious after reading children's novels in which wicked aunts emotionally torture their innocent charges. Dolores's favourite book, *Clare; or No Home*, was written by Elizabeth Merrifield, a character who also appears in 'Come to Her Kingdom' (1890) and *Modern Broods, or, Developments Unlooked For* (1900). Elizabeth, like Charlotte Yonge, justifies her professional career by giving her profits away to charity: 'I did not think of publishing […] for ever so long, but at last when David [her husband] terribly wanted some money for his mission church, I thought I would try'.[43] For Elizabeth, as for Yonge, writing in private is acceptable; publication, on the other hand, could be justified with reference to duty, religion and family.

On learning that her novel had encouraged Dolores to be rebellious, Elizabeth becomes 'a sadder and a wiser authoress', explaining to Dolores that it had brought her 'pain and punishment by the harm I know I did' but regretting that she cannot 'get at all the other girls [she] may have hurt' (*Shield,* p.359). Elizabeth plays a small part in this novel, but her 'punishment', the guilt she experiences knowing that her novel has caused Dolores to rebel against her adopted family, serves as a significant warning to those women who would pick up their pen without giving thought to the effects of their words ('living things', as Yonge called them (*Womankind*, p.229)). As a 'wiser authoress', Elizabeth's only aim in publishing children's literature is to produce something 'useful' (*Shield*, p.359). We have seen that Yonge claimed being of 'use' as her primary motivation for publishing, a claim that served to justify her desire to work and veil her ambition. Furthermore, she defined her editorial identity on the concept of being of 'use' in her role of Mother Goose as mentor to the Goslings. In the next section, I consider the construction of this persona in *The Barnacle*.

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[43] Charlotte M. Yonge, *The Two Sides of the Shield* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1889), p.358. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

**The Character of Mother Goose**

In her influential study of women's writing and the fairy tale genre, Marina Warner describes 'the immemorial storyteller, Mother Goose' as:

> a figure of fun, a foolish, ignorant old woman, a typical purveyor of old wives' tales. But she is also established, by the early eighteenth century, as a Sibyl-Nurse – who instils morality and knowledge of the world and foresees the future of her charges and prepares them for it.[44]

Mother Goose has traditionally signified the combined roles of storyteller and mentor, a combination which made this character ideal for Yonge's role of mentor to the Goslings in the 1860s. The 'murky legend' of Mother Goose can be dated back as far as 1656, and before I consider Yonge's appropriation of Mother Goose as an editorial persona in detail, I want to pause briefly to examine the historical significance of Mother Goose in order to put this figure into context.[45]

Mother Goose first appeared in print in an illustration for Charles Perrault's collection of fairy tales. This illustration depicts three children gathered around a fireside, listening enrapt to an older woman who is talking and holding a spindle, 'story weaving' just as Yonge described herself doing. Just above the older woman, is a sign that reads 'Contes de ma Mere Loye' ('Stories of Mother Goose'). This homely and intimate scene is framed by Perrault's formal title of *Histoires ou contes du temps passé, avec des moralitez* (*Stories of times past, with morals*). So, the 'storyteller is female, but the story-writer is male', a fact that is significant when we consider that Yonge employed this figure in a magazine written and read by women.[46] Indeed, Laurence Talairach-Vielmas has suggested that initially women were marginalised

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[44] Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: on Fairy Tales and their Tellers* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1994), p.79.
[45] Talairach-Vielmas, *Moulding the Female Body*, p.17.
[46] Elizabeth Wanning Harries, *Twice upon a Time: Women Writers and the History of the Fairy Tale* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), p.72. This framing of a woman's story by a man's narrative is reminiscent of the structure of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) in which Lockwood's narrative frames Nelly Dean's story telling. See Youngran Koh, 'Dismantling of Boundary and the Function of Two Narrators: A Study on *Wuthering Heights*', *Nineteenth Century Literature in English*, vol. 3 (2000), pp.43-65.

within the fairy tale genre and that Mother Goose came to symbolise that marginalisation (as a female storyteller who is often dismissed as a figure of fun).[47] Mother Goose frequently recurs as the 'typical purveyor of old wives' tales':

> [b]oth grotesque and wise, sententious and foolish, Mother Goose focused her stories on young women […]. The figure of the teller thus shaped the fairy-tale mode as a repository of female experience and of female viewpoint. […] Moreover, as Mother Goose's stories gradually invaded dominant culture in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century […] this aboriginal female wisdom left the margin to settle in salons and voice women's power.[48]

Elizabeth Wanning Harries agrees, describing the French literary salons of the seventeenth century as an important space for the woman writer (as George Eliot recognised), for '[t]o tell a fairy tale well [was] a way to shine'.[49] Wanning Harries continues that although '[m]any, indeed most, of the early writers of fairy tales in the 1690s in France were women. […] the only name from this group most readers still know is Charles Perrault', so women may have written the stories, but men published them.[50] Within this context, 'Perrault became *the* French fairy-tale writer'.[51] In the early Victorian period, the Brothers Grimm dominated the fairy tale genre, and in their re-telling of the French fairy tale, Mother Goose often served 'as the emblematic beast […] of female noise, of women's chatter'.[52] Talairach-Vielmas describes the Victorian fairy tale as a 'literary battlefield', in which, during the 1860s and 1870s in particular, women writers can be seen to be 'reappropriating' the genre in order to 'debunk' the myth of the Victorian 'angel in the house', and reclaim the genre from male writers such as the Brothers Grimm.[53] Yonge's positive characterisation of Mother Goose, as a fairy tale woman writer rather than a foolish gossip, needs to be appreciated within this wider context.

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[47] Talairach-Vielmas, *Moulding the Female Body*, p.17.
[48] Talairach-Vielmas, *Moulding the Female Body*, pp.17-18.
[49] Wanning Harries, *Twice upon a Time*, p.65.
[50] Wanning Harries, *Twice upon a Time*, p.21.
[51] Wanning Harries, *Twice upon a Time*, p.26.
[52] Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde*, p.56.
[53] Talairach-Vielmas, *Moulding the Female Body*, p.20.

Although in *The Barnacle* illustrations Yonge often carries the signifiers of the witch, such as the 'stick, the conical hat and the apron and petticoats',[54] her version of Mother Goose as editor shares few of the more unappealing physical attributes traditionally associated with the comical and grotesque figure of the Grimms' tales, such as the 'crone features, her chapfallen jaw, the toothless bight of chin and nose in profile'.[55] The illustration of Yonge as Mother Goose shows her with the head of a bird but the body of a young woman (see figure 2.i below), with a small, feminine waist and dainty hands and feet. She is not a figure of repulsion or humiliation, but a figure to be admired: feminine, empowered and respected. In this incarnation, Yonge's professional persona fits Talairach-Vielmas' description of 'the more glamorous figure of the fairy-tale woman writer'.[56] In *The Barnacle*, with illustrations depicting a Mother Goose literally opening the door for other women writers (see figure 2.e below), Yonge was represented as just such a fairy tale woman writer.

As Julia Courtney has argued, despite the playful and 'silly' connotations of the term 'goose' (referred to as 'ridiculous creatures' in *The Monthly Packet*), the work published in *The Barnacle* was taken nearly as seriously by Yonge and her contributors as those in *The Monthly Packet*.[57] The tone of *The Barnacle* was playful and light-hearted, but Yonge edited her contributors' work just as thoroughly as she did for those writing for her other magazine. The illustration for the 1865 Christmas number (figure 2.c) demonstrates this point. The inscription reads: 'Mother Goose, as

[54] Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde*, p.156.
[55] Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde*, p.156.
[56] Talairach-Vielmas, *Moulding the Female Body*, p.18.
[57] See Courtney, 'The Barnacle: A Manuscript Magazine of the 1860s', pp.71-97.

Hercules infuriate, threatens to slay her loving children'.[58] In the top half of the

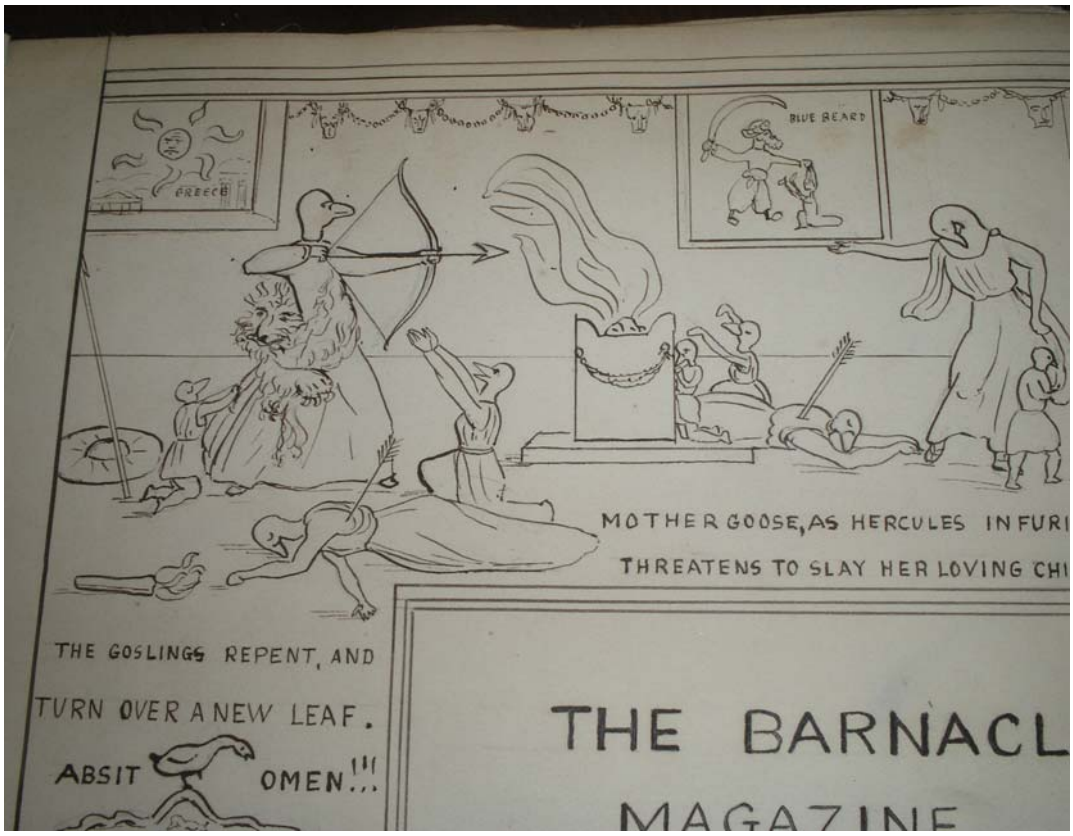


**Figure 2.c. [Anonymous], [Opening Illustration], *The Barnacle*, vol. 10 (Christmas Number 1865).**

picture, Yonge (as Mother Goose) fires a cross-bow at her contributors; two lie dead at her feet, arrows protruding from their backs. Two more cling to her skirts and beg for mercy, mirroring the victim of Blue Beard in the picture hanging near their editor. The lower half of this illustration (figure 2.d) carries the inscription 'The Industry of the Goslings', showing them studying the works of Aristotle, Plato and the History of Greenland in a vast library.[59] The humour of the illustration is evident, as is the suggestion that Yonge was a hard task-master, running a kind of literary sweatshop in which the young women were pushed to study hard, learning how to produce scholarly and entertaining contributions. The implication here is that despite

[58] [Anonymous], [Opening Illustration], *The Barnacle*, vol. 10 (Christmas Number 1865), [no page number given].
[59] [Anonymous], [Opening Illustration], [no page number given].

the fun, there was a very serious intent behind this journal. We have already seen that ambition was far from taboo in *The Barnacle.* In an illustration for volume fourteen (see figure 2.e) Mother Goose is depicted holding open the door to 'Ye Porte of Authorship' for a flood of Goslings who are racing through it, some carrying manuscripts in their hands. This depiction of Yonge as editor of course emphasises the nurturing and facilitating elements of her self-appointed mentoring role; she is,

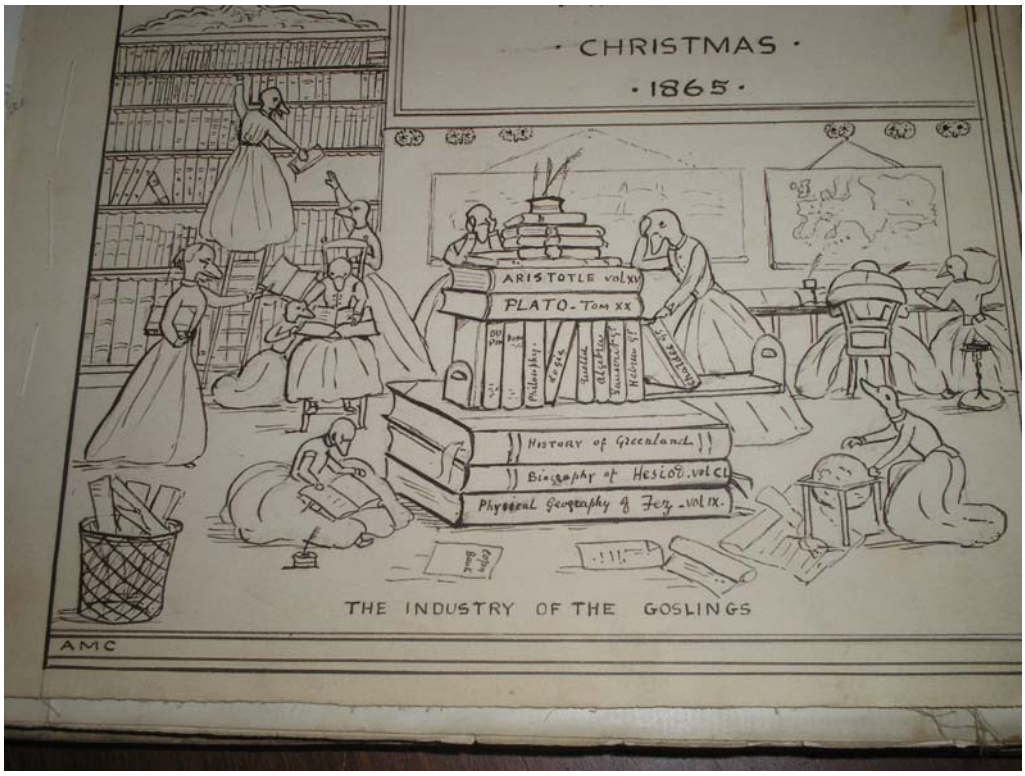


**Figure 2.d. [Anonymous], [Opening Illustration], *The Barnacle*, vol. 10 (Christmas Number 1865).**

after all, holding the door open and beckoning the Goslings through. However, the focus of the illustration is the editor, Mother Goose, amongst a myriad of smaller, identical looking women writers. It was, the illustration suggests, a powerful position.

So, by labelling themselves as ‘Goslings’, the young contributors to *The Barnacle* were not necessarily emphasising their ‘silliness’, but rather their immaturity (despite one Gosling, ‘Chelsea China’ (Christabel Coleridge), in fact being twenty years old at the time). The term clearly reflected, not so much the youth of the contributors, but more a stage of development, the state of being an unfledged

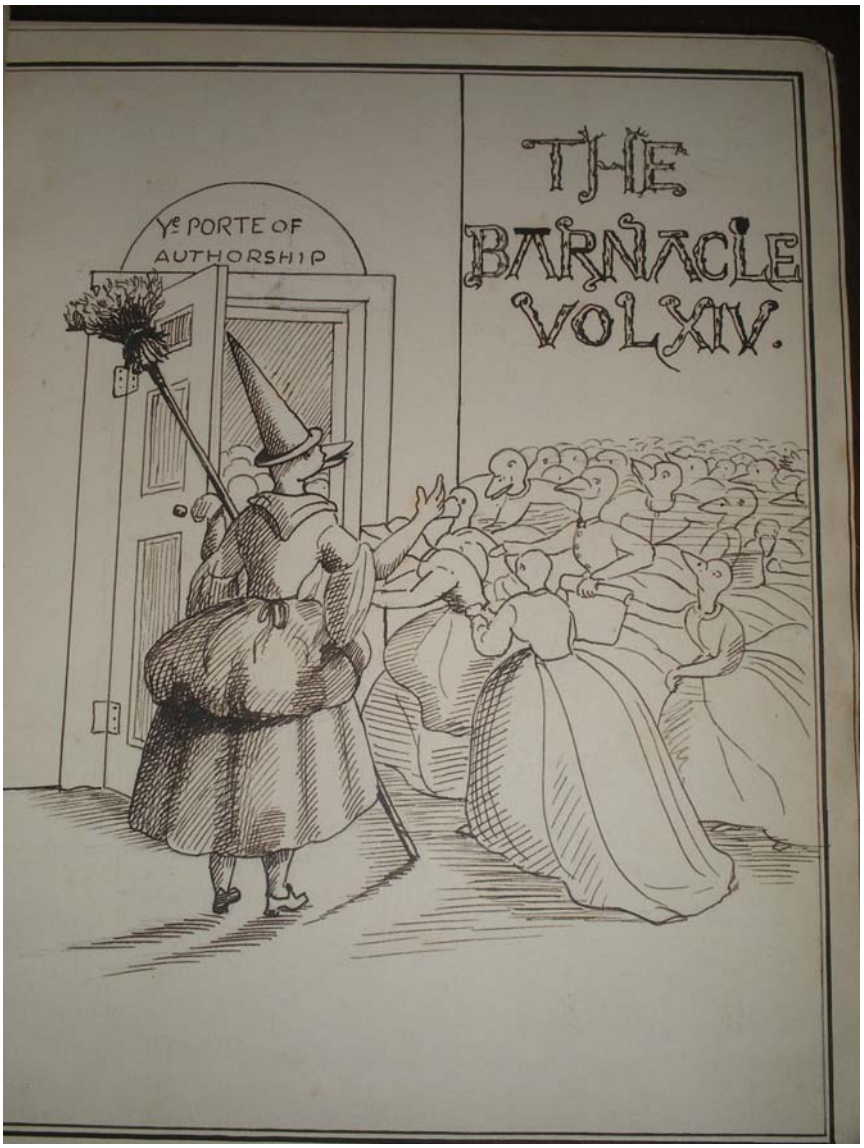


**Figure 2.e. [Anonymous], *The Barnacle*, vol. 14 (1866).**

author. *The Barnacle* was, therefore, explicitly set up as an ‘in-house version’ of *The Monthly Packet*, a testing-ground, usefully semi-public (or ‘private[ly] public’, to borrow Coleridge’s term) in tone because it was circulated around the closed group of women, before the step was made to the fully public space of *The Monthly Packet*, one of the most successful religious periodicals on the

market.[60] To put it another way, *The Barnacle* offered young ambitious women writers a kind of finishing school for honing their talents and learning the processes of magazine publication.

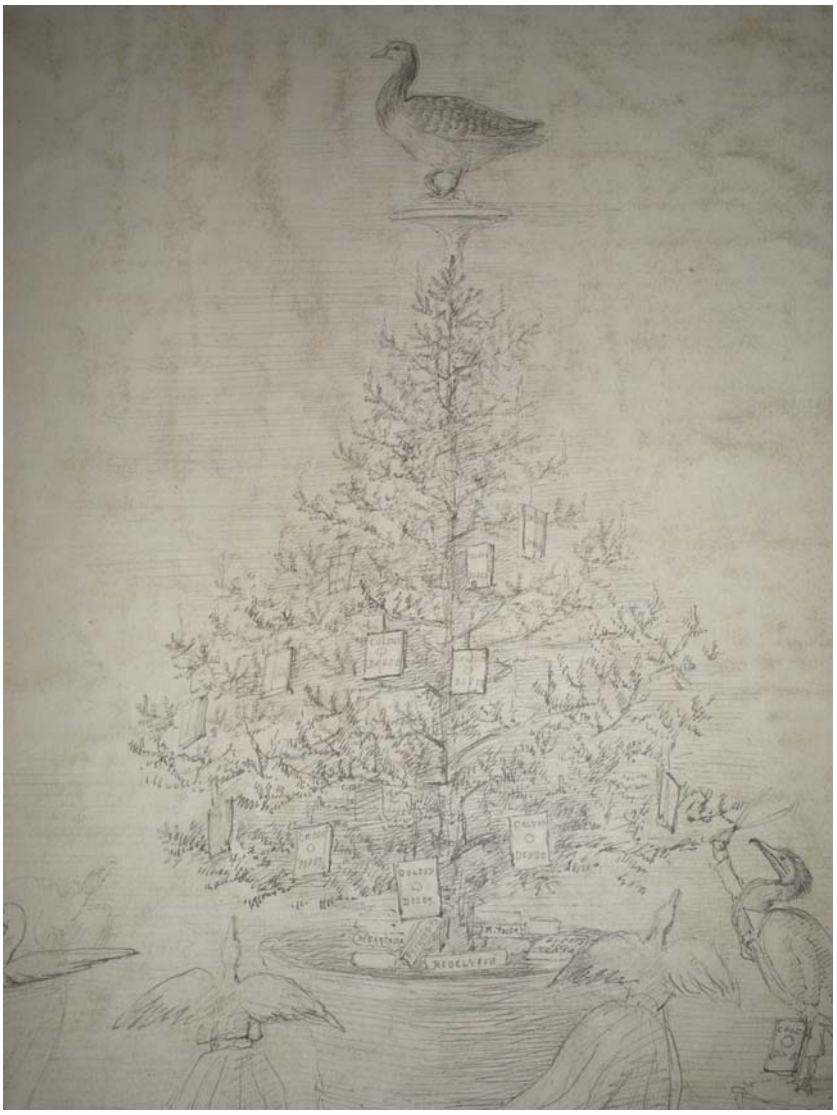

**Figure 2.f. [Anonymous], *The Barnacle*, vol. 6 (Christmas Number 1864).**

Yonge also employed *The Barnacle* to puff *The Monthly Packet* and her own fiction. The illustration for the 1864 Christmas number (figure 2.f) depicts the Goslings gathered around a Christmas tree, joyously receiving Yonge's novels as presents, amongst which are bound volumes of *The Monthly Packet* which hang temptingly from the tree. The illustration playfully toys with *The Barnacle*'s purpose as a publication, for a bird (which looks like a cormorant) stands on a 'Macmillan & Co' plinth (not quite visible in figure 2.f), caught in the act of snipping one of Yonge's novels from the tree by a Gosling who rushes to stop him,

[60] Julia Courtney, 'Mother Goose's Brood: Some Followers of Charlotte Yonge and their Novels', Julia Courtney and Clemence Schultze (eds) *Characters and Scenes: Studies in Charlotte M. Yonge* (Abingdon, Berkshire: Beechcroft Books, 2007), p.189.

wings spread out in alarm. So, while the work in *The Barnacle* was taken seriously, it is important to note that the dominant tone of the magazine suggests a determination on the part of the Goslings not to take themselves too seriously.

A pertinent example of this is the Goslings' pseudonyms. Reflecting the waning trend for anonymous publication, the literary contributions to *The Barnacle* were not signed and any pseudonyms employed were typically mischievous and light-hearted: 'Ladybird', 'Ugly Duckling', 'Bog Oak', 'Cobweb' and 'Iceberg'. However, in such a closely-knit circle, members of the group may well have been aware of each other's pen names and indeed, a circulation list (with addresses) was included at the beginning of each volume so that each Gosling could pass the magazine on to the next once she had finished reading it. In 'To the Reader', the introductory note that Yonge wrote for the first number, the editor fondly mentions this play at anonymity:

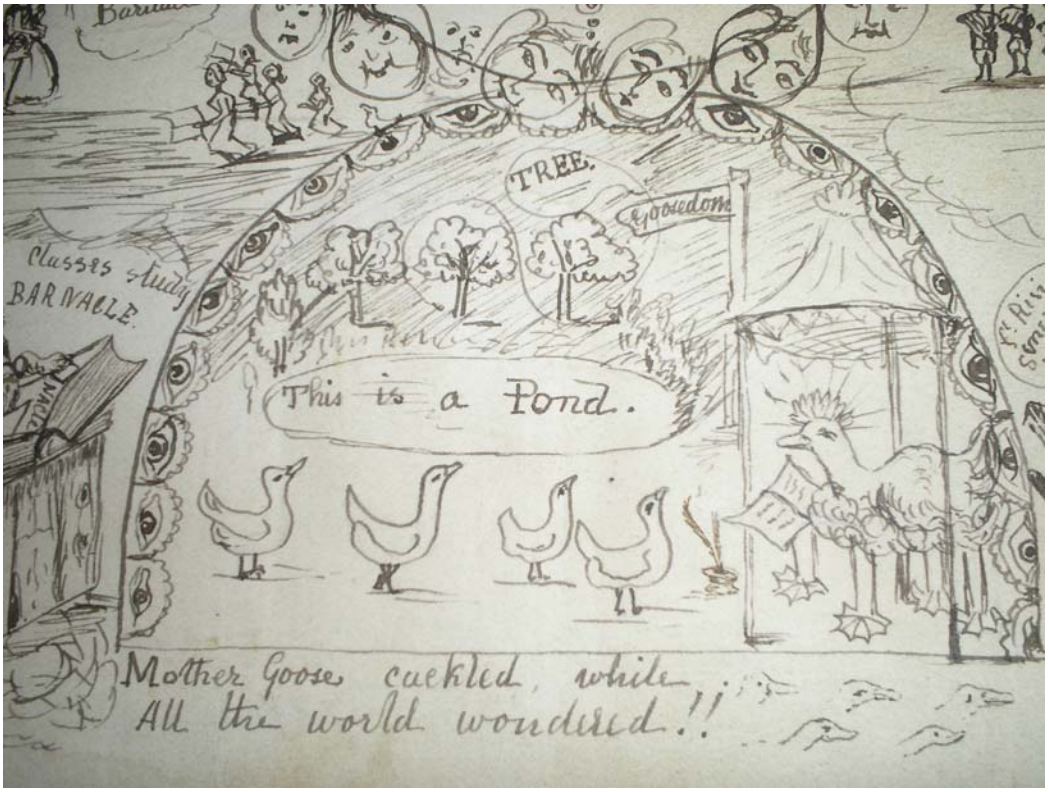


**Figure 2.g. [Anonymous], [Opening Illustration], *The Barnacle,* vol. 1 (September 1863).**

> Goosedom is about to make its first appearance to its own public […]. Be it known that our own feelings of confidence are not absolutely such as our able artist has depicted on the title page. Perhaps we are nearer veiling our faces with our wings (if they were grown beyond the size of flappers) and entreating the readers' kind consideration.[61]

In this passage, as Courtney has pointed out, Yonge referred to the all-female community of writers and illustrators as her 'Goosedom', and indeed *The Barnacle* was a type of literary kingdom over which she, as editor, reigned.[62] A poem which 'Bog Oak' published in this number, and which Courtney has called an 'anthem to Goosedom',[63] demonstrates this point: 'Wherever unfledged Goslings through Goosedom's bounds run loose, / Shall be great glee to all who see the form of Mother Goose'.[64] The illustration that Yonge referred to in her introduction (see figure 2.g) also demonstrates the playfully confident tone of the first number. The bottom of the illustration depicts a large goose reading to four smaller birds, underneath which is written 'Mother Goose cackled, while / All the world wondered!!' This is a reference, perhaps, to Tennyson's *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1854), which serves to parody the military motif that many editorial introductions employed at the time: 'Charging an army, while / All the world wondered'.[65] Encircling the periodical's title are images of the contributors' faces (just visible at the top of figure 2.g), which offer a deliberate contrast to the editor's coy reference to 'veiling our faces'. While Yonge's editorial note may have feminised the publication with the reference to the coy young contributors veiling their faces, these tongue-in-cheek grandiose claims for the periodical made through the illustrations suggest a playfully aggressive tone, in keeping with the focus on ambition that we have already seen.

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[61] [Charlotte Yonge], 'To the Reader', *The Barnacle*, vol. 1 (1863), [no page number given].
[62] Cited in Julia Courtney, 'The Barnacle', p.74.
[63] Courtney, 'Mother Goose's Brood', p.189.
[64] [Bog Oak], *The Barnacle*, vol. 14 (1867), [no page number given]. Manuscript held at the Lady Margaret Hall Library, Oxford.
[65] Lord Alfred Tennyson, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, in M. H. Abrams (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol. 2, 8th ed. (New York and London: Norton, 2006), p.1189, ll.30-31.


**Figure 2.h. [Anonymous], [Opening Illustration], *The Barnacle*, vol. VII (June 1865).**

As Julia Courtney has noted in her recent research into 'Mother Goose's Brood', as a vehicle for budding authors, *The Barnacle* did produce some successful careers. Many of the contributors went on to publish in *The Monthly Packet* (Christabel Coleridge being the most successful example), and so this magazine was successful in providing training for young women wishing to contribute to Yonge's better-known periodical. This is reflected in *The Barnacle*'s illustrations. In 'The Progress of Composition' (figure 2.h) the young contributors are depicted as developing through the difficult stages of authorship, eventually ending in successful publication. Proudly holding her head aloft on the left of the image is 'The Authoress who thinks they have "an idea"'; slumped over a desk with her head on her hands is 'The Authoress who has none'; tearing at her hair is the author in 'Distraction'; sitting upright with a large quill in her hand is the author who sees 'Gleams of light!!' and

finally, as she carries her manuscript to the post office, the author's 'Bliss! Triumph!!!!!'

The 1866 number (see figure 2.i) crystallises this sense of triumph, for here Mother Goose is depicted as holding high a pair of scales containing *The Barnacle*, far outweighing the piles of well-established periodicals such as *Frasers*, *Blackwood's*, *Temple Bar*, *Good Words* and the *Quarterly Review*. The bound volumes on which Mother Goose stands carry the titles of *Cackle*, *Hiss* and *Chronicles of*

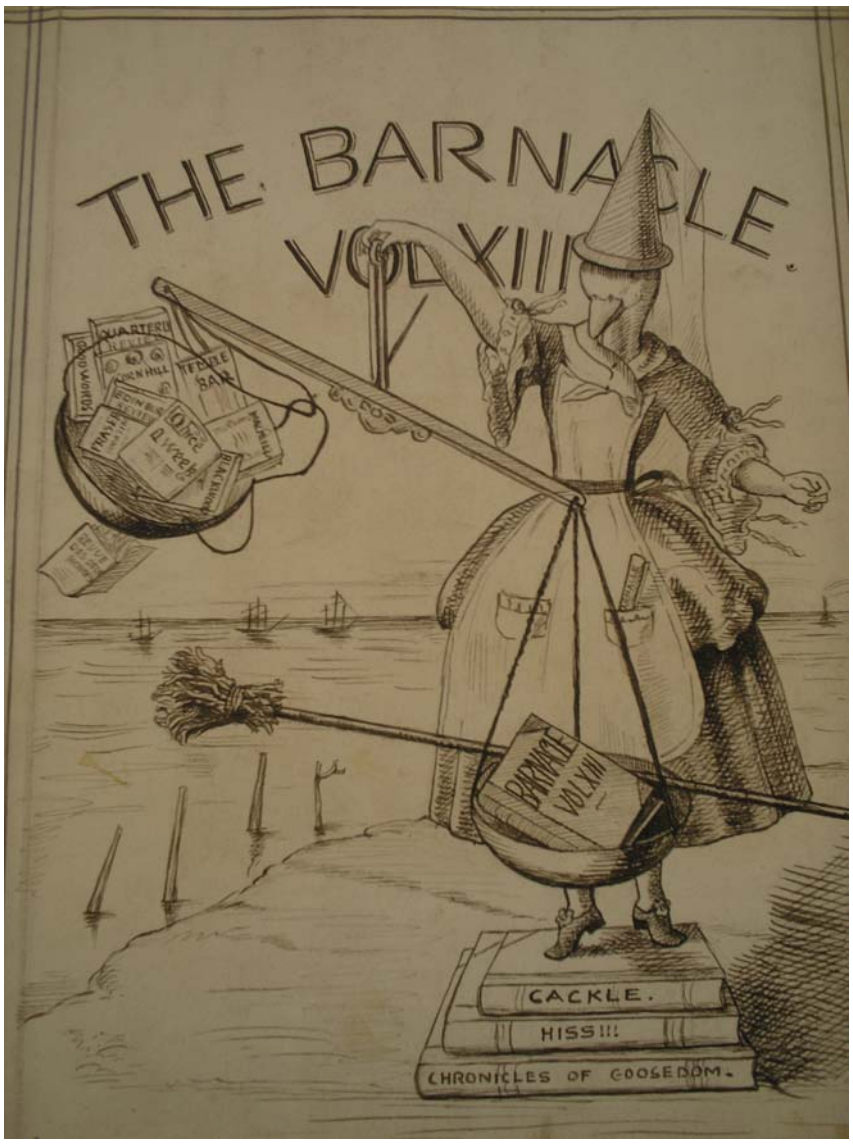


**Figure 2.i. [Anonymous], [Opening Illustration], *The Barnacle*, vol. 13 (1866).**

*Goosedom* (representing the young contributors' work). Clearly 'women's noise', the cackle of Mother Goose, reigned supreme in this magazine.[66] This is not to suggest that this manuscript magazine, which was circulated privately, was intended as, or

[66] Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde*, p.56.

seriously represented, a threat to the magazines listed in the illustration; this, of course, was not the purpose of *The Barnacle*. This illustration clearly lampoons the magazine by making a comparison with these established journals. Nevertheless, the point is made that Mother Goose's 'cackle' triumphs and that the Goslings could prove a success in the world of *Fraser's* and *Blackwood's*, if they learnt to model themselves on their editor.

*The Barnacle* clearly figured Yonge as an editor in the way that the largely un-illustrated yet widely-circulated *The Monthly Packet* could not have done. The playful nature of these illustrations echoes those of Florence Marryat as editor of *London Society* (which I discuss in the next chapter). Although perhaps not particularly useful in terms of advertising, as *The Barnacle*'s readers were already fans of Yonge and *The Monthly Packet*, *The Barnacle* did provide an opportunity for exploring and toying with the editor's public persona through illustration. Although Yonge never appeared in *The Monthly Packet* in the guise of Mother Goose, the goose as female storyteller did surface in that magazine during the period in which Yonge was also editing *The Barnacle*.

'The Goose', a short story by Mrs. Alfred Gatty, was published as part of a series in *The Monthly Packet* called *One of Aunt Judy's Letters*. The story is written as a series of letters between 'Aunt Judy' and 'the little ones' who are not named, but ranked in terms of age and numbered accordingly ('Number 1', 'Number 2', etc.). One of the youngest children (implied by her label of 'Number 8') is frightened by a goose during a visit to a farm and this incident is related to Aunt Judy in letters. Aunt Judy then writes a story for 'Number 1' to read aloud to all the children. The moral of Aunt Judy's story is that the children should not dismiss the goose as a 'weak-minded' and 'silly' bird, for she is actually 'wise', having only gained her reputation

for 'silliness' by talking too 'fast'.[67] Gatty's story is relevant here for the moral of this story echoes Yonge's concern in *Womankind* (and Eliot's in 'Silly Novels') that by talking 'fast', women will only detract from their 'wise' words.

Margaret Gatty (1809-1873) was a well-connected children's author (being a close friend of Tennyson), who successfully combined her interest in naturalism with editorship of *Aunt Judy's Magazine*, founded in 1866, to which Yonge had contributed. Hugely popular, *Aunt Judy's Tales* was published in 1859, the same time that Gatty was regularly contributing to *The Monthly Packet* as one of the few authors who were named (as 'Aunt Judy') in the contents pages. The goose in this story is initially portrayed in typically misogynistic terms: feminised, chattering, noisy and 'weak-minded' ('The Goose', p.306). Aunt Judy's story describes the goose attempting to talk to various visitors to her farmyard (a cook, a lawyer, a doctor, artist, musician, teacher and school boys) but as being continually chased away: 'I've got a thousand things to say, but people are so busy, there is no getting them to listen' ('The Goose', p.255). The bird is clearly a figure of fun: the children laugh at her when she advises them to copy her walk: 'swing yourself round from side to side each step as you see me do, and you'll fall into a much nicer pace' ('The Goose', p.296).

The last visitor, however, is a little girl who calms the bird by reading to it until it falls asleep. The children listening to Aunt Judy's story realise that they misunderstood the 'poor goose' by mocking it and begin to feel 'some sort of pity […] for the ill-used bird to whom so many people owed so much' ('The Goose', p.306). 'Number 1' emphasises this message by mentioning respected 'published accounts', which claim that 'no birds were more intelligent, or more affectionate in disposition, than those poor despised waddlers whom everyone laughs at' ('The

[67] [Mrs. Alfred Gatty], 'The Goose', in *The Monthly Packet*, vol. 24 (1860), p.293. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

Goose', pp.306-307). However, the children ask their mother why, if the goose is an intelligent bird, it is mocked in fairy tales, specifically in the Brothers Grimm story of the goose that was eaten by the fox. Their mother explains that as geese have 'a terrible habit of chattering and gabbling […] there is an old idea, that great talkers have small wits, and so I fear geese will always have the credit of being silly, let them be ever so wise, unless they leave off gabbling so fast' ('The Goose', p.308).

With the accusation that 'silliness' ruins reputations, and that talking 'fast' will detract from 'wise' words, we find ourselves returning to Yonge's concern over 'silly' women writers that she criticised in *Womankind*, and in George Eliot's 'Silly Novels'. It is interesting that some of the characters whom the goose attempts to influence with her talk are specifically men in professional roles, the law and medicine being vocations not open to Victorian women. The final message of this short story, which carefully stresses not that the goose should stop 'gabbling' completely, but that it should stop 'gabbling so fast', is complicated by the framework within which it is presented. Talairach-Vielmas notes in her discussion of a slightly later story called 'Amelia and the Dwarfs' by Gatty's daughter Juliana Horatia Ewing (1841–1885) that there is a deliberate foregrounding of the author's 'indebtedness to her female ancestors' story-telling'.[68] This is also the case in 'The Goose', evident by the sheer numbers of women who tell their own tale: 'Aunt Judy' herself, the youngest child who tells how the goose frightened her, the child reading 'Aunt Judy's' story aloud, an anonymous poem with which the story begins, the little girl in the story who reads aloud to the goose, and finally the mother whose moral is the last word of the story. Women's writing, as well as oral storytelling, is represented through 'Aunt Judy's' story and the anonymous poem. Importantly, male writers'

[68] Talairach-Vielmas discusses Ewing's 'Amelia and the Dwarfs' (1870) in *Moulding the Female Body*, p.68.

appropriation of the Mother Goose figure is also questioned; indeed, the children wonder at the negative representations of the Brothers Grimm, having gained a new level of empathy and respect for this traditional figure of female storytelling.

So, the underlying emphasis of this story is that no matter how 'wise' or 'intelligent' the goose may be, it is because she is too eager to 'cackle' and make 'noise' that she is dismissed as 'silly'. If, as Warner claims, the goose is linked specifically to 'women's noise', this story represents an exploration of women's voices that echoes the illustration for *The Barnacle* in 1866 (mentioned above, see figure 2.i); in this female-dominated story by Gatty, respect is earned for the creature who 'chatters' and 'gabbles' as respect is earned for Mother Goose in *The Barnacle* who stands triumphantly on volumes which explicitly reference 'women's noise' (*Cackle* and *Hiss*), holding high scales of judgement which show women's writing, *The Barnacle*, far outweighing other publications.[69] Thus the children learn respect for the figure of the female storyteller and writer throughout the progress of the narrative in *The Monthly Packet* as they do through the illustrations of *The Barnacle*. Mother Goose is not a figure of fun here, but a figure to be respected. Therefore, despite her anti-feminist sensibilities, Yonge can be read as subverting the traditional image of the figure of the female storyteller from a figure of ridicule to one to be reckoned with. Yonge's representation of women as storytellers elsewhere in her fiction is the subject of the final part of this chapter.

**The Woman Artist-Professional in Charlotte Yonge's Fiction**

June Sturrock has argued that Charlotte Yonge 'responds predictably to the changing concept of the literary woman […] with a reaffirmation of traditional duties and hierarchies', but if we read Yonge's fiction within the context that I have

[69] Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde*, p.56.

described above, then her response to the changing concept of the literary woman cannot very be easily dismissed as predictably anti-feminist.[70] Indeed, Yonge's fictional representation of the literary woman is less a reaffirmation of women's traditional duties than it is an indication of how Victorian domestic ideology could be usefully employed by women wishing to enter the profession covertly. We saw in the introduction to this chapter that Yonge justified her very successful career in terms of being of 'use' to church and family. This concept was reflected in her novels, for as Sturrock notes, her fictional 'women writers are […] justified either as didactive in their purposes – "useful" – or as in need of money for their families, or both. They fulfil their religious duties through their professional as well as their domestic duties'.[71]

Like many of Yonge's novels, *The Daisy Chain, or, Aspirations* was serialised in *The Monthly Packet* (July 1853 – December 1855) before it was published as a book. It has been described as 'the original children's novel', but this label belies the fact that it appealed to an adult audience as well as the juvenile market for which it was originally written.[72] Indeed, George Henry Lewes read *The Daisy Chain* aloud to George Eliot while on holiday in Italy, after Anthony Trollope had 'warmly recommended it'.[73] As it appeared in volume form in 1856, *The Daisy Chain* did not closely resemble the serial of *The Monthly Packet*, which finished suddenly in December 1855. The remaining chapters, which formed over half of the novel yet to be written, were added when it was published as a complete book the following year. Yonge's preface to the first edition of the novel explained this publishing strategy:

> Begun as a series of conversational sketches, the story outran both the original intention and the limits of the periodical in which it was commenced; and,

[70] Sturrock, 'Literary Women of the 1850s', p.122.
[71] Sturrock, 'Literary Women of the 1850s', p.128.
[72] Vallone 'Women Writing for Children', p.282.
[73] Thompson, *Reviewing Sex*, p.101.

> such as it has become, it is here presented to those who have already made acquaintance with the May family, and may be willing to see more of them.[74]

As Amy de Gruchy has noted, the sudden cessation of the serial ensured that *The Monthly Packet*'s young readers were only exposed to the May family's *adolescent* experiences; the second half of the novel, reserved for the book format, depicts their lives as young adults and therefore includes details of romance and crisis of faith which Yonge deemed unsuitable for the magazine's readership.[75] Cutting the serial off abruptly also provided the necessary 'cliff-hanger' ending that encouraged continued interest in the story from those magazine readers who wanted to find out what happened to the May children next. It was, therefore, a shrewd tactic that whetted the appetite of the magazine readers, ensuring they would be eager to read the book.

With its focus on 'submission to the will of God, fulfilment of duty, self-sacrifice, and endurance', *The Daisy Chain* represents the archetypal domestic novel that was so popular during the 1850s and upon which Young had built her career.[76] Although Fryckstedt stresses that '[t]he object of the domestic novel was usually to describe love ending in marriage',[77] *The Daisy Chain* actually complicates this model. As Martha Vicinus has noted, Yonge's novel represents 'one of the most popular explorations of the life of the unmarried daughter'.[78] The story of Ethel May, the heroine of the novel, challenges conventional definitions of the popular domestic novel because she remains unmarried in both *The Daisy Chain* and its sequel *The Trial, or, More Links of the Daisy Chain.* Indeed, Sanders has noted that in this novel,

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[74] Charlotte Yonge, *The Daisy Chain, or, Aspirations* (London: Macmillan, 1902), p.vii. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.
[75] Amy de Gruchy, 'The Monthly Packet', *Proceedings of the Inaugural Conference of the Charlotte Mary Yonge Society Fellowship* ([no publication details given], 1995), p.4.
[76] Fryckstedt, 'Defining the Domestic Genre', p.9.
[77] Fryckstedt, 'Defining the Domestic Genre', p.13.
[78] Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920* (London: Virago, 1985), p.10.

as in much of Yonge's fiction, marriage is just 'one of many domestic troubles, often self-inflicted, and chosen by the weaker members of the family'.[79] Christabel Coleridge wrote that Yonge's idea for *The Daisy Chain* 'rose out of discussions with Miss Dyson, and its root idea was the danger of ambition'.[80] So, at the heart of this novel is not 'love ending in marriage', but rather a woman tempted by ambition and the tension this places upon her domestic responsibilities.

Ethel is relevant to my discussion of the artist-professional because she is eager for a vocation, yet her ambition is cut off abruptly in her childhood before she has begun to fully explore the options available to her. The lesson that Ethel must learn is to perform the role of the dutiful daughter, a role that she struggles to fit into. Described as 'queer and unformed' by her sister, Ethel is a tomboy whose governess worries that her hair is 'rough' because she 'hardly spends five minutes over it in the morning, and with a book before her the whole time' (*Daisy,* p.159). But *The Daisy Chain* is not just concerned with Ethel's ambition. The aspirations of all the children of the May family, male and female, are explored, and typically of Yonge's 'distrust of ambition',[81] each child must learn to 'properly direct' their talent 'toward the welfare of other people'.[82] The goals of all the May children must be 'spiritual', rather than focused upon 'public fame and glory'.[83] As such, public life comes to be just as dangerous for men as for women: they too must not get caught up in the 'dash' for a profession ('Authorship', p.185). Ambition is explored most obviously along gender lines through the characters of Ethel and her brother Norman. This competitive sibling relationship resembles that of Maggie and Tom Tulliver in George Eliot's *The Mill on*

[79] Sanders, 'Marriage and the Antifeminist Woman Novelist', p.30.
[80] Coleridge, *Charlotte Mary Yonge*, p.183.
[81] Valerie Sanders, '"All-sufficient to One Another"? Charlotte Yonge and the Family Chronicle', Kay Boardman and Shirley Jones (eds), *Popular Victorian Women Writers* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), p.90.
[82] Sturrock, *"Heaven and Home"*, p.34.
[83] Sturrock, *"Heaven and Home"*, p.34.

*the Floss* (1860), for just as Maggie and Tom seem to mirror each other in certain aspects of their personality in their early childhood, so Ethel and Norman are, in many respects, 'two halves of the same person'.[84] Sturrock has noted that the education of girls is central to this novel, reflecting the wider social context of 'a new surge of interest in women's education' at mid-century.[85] Like the heroine of *Aurora Leigh* (published in the same year as *The Daisy Chain*), Ethel benefits from a masculine as well as a feminine education, learning pointless facts with her governess during the day but also sitting in on her brother's classical education. Like Maggie, Ethel finds that 'intellectual competition is adjacent but out of reach', for the time comes when her learning alongside her brother becomes inappropriate and is frowned upon by the rest of her family.[86] Indeed, it is Norman who articulates the whole family's concern when he warns her that 'it is really time for you to stop, or you would get into a regular learned lady, and be good for nothing. I don't mean that knowing more than other people would make you so, but minding nothing else would' (*Daisy*, p.182).

The differentiation that Norman makes here is significant for the implication is that Ethel's learning has already distracted her from her rightful sphere, the home. Indeed, Norman's concern is proved to be justified when Ethel, tired from reading, unwittingly endangers the life of younger brother Aubrey when she fails to notice that his frock has caught alight. As Sanders notes, the message here is that egotism endangers family.[87] After this incident, Ethel's father makes it clear that her studies must be renounced: 'There's no bearing it! I'll put a stop to all schools and Greek, if it is to lead to this, and make you good for nothing' (*Daisy*, p.123). Clearly, Ethel's command of Greek cannot make her 'good for' anything, as the professional options

[84] Sanders, *Eve's Renegades*, p.101.
[85] Sturrock, *"Heaven and Home"*, p.29.
[86] Sanders, *Eve's Renegades*, p.63.
[87] Sanders, *Eve's Renegades*, p.64.

as a woman are limited. Indeed, if she does not learn her place in the family, her studying could make her 'good for nothing' because she would be a neglectful wife and mother.

It is, however, Ethel's oldest sister Margaret, permanently disabled from the accident that killed their mother, who fully articulates the tension between duty and ambition: 'we all know that men have more power than women, and I suppose the time has come for Norman to pass beyond you. He would not be cleverer than any one, if he could not do more than a girl at home' (*Daisy*, p.163). Margaret continues:

> 'And for that would you give up being a useful, steady daughter and sister at home? The sort of woman that dear mamma wished to make you, and a comfort to papa.
>
> Ethel was silent, and large tears were gathering.
>
> 'You own that that is the first thing?'
>
> 'Yes', said Ethel, faintly (*Daisy*, p.163).

Like Maggie, Ethel must learn that the 'proper' subjects for her education are not Latin and Greek, but femininity, and so she must renounce her learning, a sacrifice which Yonge 'never makes […] look easy'.[88] As Sanders suggests, '[t]here is a futility about Ethel's sacrifice […] a sense that she deserves better'.[89] However, Ethel's character development depends upon her learning to bend her will and behaviour to a gender appropriate role, that of the dutiful daughter, so that by the end of the novel she has achieved 'hard-won femininity'.[90] Indeed, Ethel's potential marriage to her cousin Norman Ogilvie is prevented because she decides that it is her duty to remain with her father: 'where Ethel had treasured her resolve to work for Cocksmoor, there she also laid up her secret vow – that no earthly object should be placed between her and her father' (*Daisy*, p.350). As Sturrock comments, Ethel 'slowly, painfully and conscientiously' accepts her feminine role as a 'religious duty',

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[88] Sanders, *Eve's Renegades*, p.63.
[89] Sanders, 'Marriage and the antifeminist woman novelist', p.28.
[90] Sturrock, *"Heaven and Home"*, p.35. See Sanders, *Eve's Renegades*, pp.91-103, for a discussion of Yonge's men and 'heroes'.

and in *The Trial*, we see her established in her dead mother's place as the family 'authority'.[91] She transforms from 'Ethel the Unready', as Norman calls her, to 'King Ethelred' (*Daisy*, p.560).

Like Rachel, the heroine of *The Clever Woman of the Family*, Ethel searches about her for a 'worthy ambition' (*Daisy*, p.22) within the narrow confines of femininity. Warned off studying by her family, she is allowed to pursue the regeneration of the community of Cocksmoor, a poverty-stricken district near the May family home. As Leslee Thorne-Murphy has noted, like Ethel, for Yonge the 'rhetoric of charity allowed her to participate fully in the professional marketplace while still lending her literary output a value that resonated with her own moral convictions'.[92] This project is directly linked to Ethel's development into adulthood: as one character observes, 'Cocksmoor will make a woman of her' (*Daisy*, p.560). While Ethel's studies are too obviously competitive with her brother, her work in Cocksmoor is appropriately feminine and amateur (it is not intended to lead to a profession as Norman's studies are). Yet, not everyone in her family approves. As visiting Cocksmoor takes Ethel into the 'rough quarry settlement where [she is] exposed to the realities of poverty', her governess worries that her charity work is inappropriate for her 'age, class and gender' (*Daisy*, p.561).[93] Although more appropriate than studying, even charitable work that takes Ethel out of the home is considered as suspect by some characters.

Like Yonge, who as we have seen sold her first piece of fiction at a charity bazaar, Ethel considers publication so that she can donate the proceeds to the Cocksmoor project:

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[91] Sturrock, *"Heaven and Home"*, p.34 and p.38.
[92] Thorne-Murphy, 'The Charity Bazaar', p.892.
[93] Thorne-Murphy, 'The Charity Bazaar', p.883.

> She had heard in books, of girls writing poetry, romance, history – gaining fifties and hundreds. Could not some of the myriads of fancies floating in her mind thus be made available? She would compose, publish, earn money – some day call papa, show him her hoard, beg him to take it, and, never owning whence it came, raise the building (*Daisy*, p.23).

Remuneration and altruism are oddly mixed in this passage. Ethel's thoughts are clearly on what she can earn, 'fifties and hundreds', but her desire to 'earn money' is diluted by her dream of secrecy, as she plans to 'hoard' her profits, and then hand them over to her family. It is not insignificant that at this moment, when Ethel dreams of authorship (which may remind us of George Eliot's 'dream' of authorship), her father, mother and elder sister are involved in a catastrophic accident which kills her mother and leaves her sister permanently disabled. Before she has been able to articulate her ambition beyond her 'dream', Ethel is forced into the role of dutiful daughter, in training for her role as replacement of the family's mother-figure.

Yet Ethel does sell a 'ballad' to a 'school magazine', gaining permission from her father to use the money for Cocksmoor. When her elder brother reads it, and criticises her 'poor metaphors' and 'sentimental' lines, Ethel feels 'annihilated', but importantly does not give up writing. She later tells Norman that: 'I have not given them [her verses] up altogether. I do scribble down things that tease me by running in my head, when I want to clear my brains, and know what I mean' (*Daisy*, p.343). Thus Ethel becomes a private writer, just as Yonge said she would have been, had her father not allowed her to publish. Ethel remains an artist of sorts, but withdraws from the marketplace. She does, however, organise a charity bazaar for the residents of Cocksmoor, or a 'Fancy Fair', as her sister calls it (*Daisy*, p.302). So, although she renounces her studies and authorship, she is still able to engage with the marketplace, albeit through a very limited and specific forum. Leslee Thorne-Murphy has recently highlighted the importance of the charity bazaar to Yonge's concept of professionalism in this novel. 'For Yonge', Thorne-Murphy suggests, 'the charity

bazaar was a realm where women could raise money unabashedly',[94] and ultimately '[t]he rhetoric of charity allowed [Ethel] to participate in the professional marketplace'.[95] As in Yonge's career, engagement with market economy is justified through charity.

Ethel's nervousness about the idea of a charity bazaar is one of the signifiers that she is slowly learning gender appropriate behaviour: she worries that '[s]chools are not such perfect places that we can build them without fear, and, if the means are to be raised by a bargain for amusement – if they are to come from frivolity instead of self-denial, I am afraid of them' (*Daisy*, p.302). For Thorne-Murphy, what Ethel objects to here is 'the market mentality of a charity bazaar, which demands that goods mediate between a donor and a charity'.[96] Popular since the 1820s, the bazaar 'created a site where classes could intermix; a site where men and women, boys and girls, interacted outside the bounds of chaperoned homes; and a site where a slightly carnivalesque milieu allowed the rules of polite society to fluctuate'.[97] Appropriately, therefore, Ethel's 'Fancy Fair' is feminised: the marquee is converted to a 'bower', flanked by a 'pyramid' of 'gorgeous and delicious' hot-house flowers, which are to be sold for the bazaar (*Daisy*, p.316). Within these bowers, 'brightly coloured' stalls are 'artistically arranged' with 'domestic hobbycrafts' in a 'glowing Eastern pattern of scarlet, black, and blue' (*Daisy*, p.316).[98] As Thorne-Murphy notes, the goods for sale are 'watercolored drawings, decorative vases, and lacework antimacassars, interspersed with colorful watchguards and frilly pincushions', which 'Yonge deliberately describes […] in aesthetic terms'.[99]

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[94] Thorne-Murphy, 'The Charity Bazaar', p.881.
[95] Thorne-Murphy, 'The Charity Bazaar', p.886.
[96] Thorne-Murphy, 'The Charity Bazaar', p.885.
[97] Thorne-Murphy, 'The Charity Bazaar', p.886.
[98] Thorne-Murphy, 'The Charity Bazaar', p.886.
[99] Thorne-Murphy, 'The Charity Bazaar', p.887.

The bazaar allows Yonge to explore the concept of value, an important element in professionalism, as well as what constitutes the popular and the serious in high and low art. For example, Ethel's brother Norman pays an 'extortionate price' for a sketch by a girl called Meta, who will eventually become his wife (*Daisy*, p.321). Meta's sketch is 'of an old cedar-tree, with Stoneborough Minster in the distance, and the Welsh hills beyond' (*Daisy,* p. 320). Not only does Norman purchase the handiwork of the woman he loves, but also the scene she has drawn is of significance for it depicts the tree under which they met. As Thorne-Murphy suggests, 'the reader understands that the sketch holds sentimental and moral value for Norman far beyond the monetary price he paid', so that 'use-value is immeasurable and the high monetary price justified'.[100] Meta's art, therefore, signifies a spiritual bond with Norman as well as a financial transaction. Likewise, Ethel's sister, Flora, runs the most popular stall because she sells items (watchguards, penwipers and antimacassars) that are useful within the middle-class home, as well as aesthetically pleasing, items that are 'tasteful, and fairly worth the moderate price set on them' (*Daisy,* p. 320). As Thorne-Murphy notes, the charity bazaar reflects the literary bazaar that Yonge was engaged in, and that Ethel briefly entered into. For Yonge, the 'use-value' of her work was of utmost importance, as was her 'endeavoring to perfect her aesthetic and literary expertise'.[101] So, in *The Daisy Chain*, Yonge explored issues of the market economy covertly through the trope of the charity bazaar and her heroine's brief encounter with authorship. *Dynevor Terrace*, published a year later, explores the tensions placed on the woman artist-professional more openly.

Sturrock describes Yonge's *Dynevor Terrace* as 'one of the earlier fictional representations of the woman writer', noting that it was published in the same year as

[100] Thorne-Murphy, 'The Charity Bazaar', p.889.
[101] Thorne-Murphy, 'The Charity Bazaar', p.889.

Margaret Oliphant's *The Three Athelings*, which I discussed in the previous chapter.[102] The heroine Isabel Conway is introduced to the reader as 'an ideal' of womanhood whose eyes reveal the tranquil 'sphere apart where she dwells'.[103] Much like *The Three Athelings* in which Agnes's story is sidelined for the demands of the romance plot, the plot of *Dynevor Terrace* focuses at times on the dramas of other characters, but throughout the narrative the woman artist-professional can be seen working at her vocation. For Isabel, that vocation is her 'precious secret […] a very pretty romance' called the *Chapel in the Valley* (*Dynevor*, p.369). Set in Medieval France, Isabel's is a 'pious romance about the Crusades', written to be read aloud to her sisters. Her writing is represented as so powerful that she moves her sisters to tears during her recitals:

> Twice had Isabel written [the parting of her hero and heroine], pouring out her heart in the high-souled tender devotion of Roland and his Adeline; and both feeling and description were beautiful and poetical, though unequal. Louisa [her little sister] used to cry whenever she heard it, yet only wished to hear it again and again (*Dynevor*, p.127).

In this passage, Isabel's work echoes George Eliot's ideal of art as spiritual exchange, for she connects with her audience through her realistic portrayal of feeling, so that her sisters are emotionally engaged and are eager to hear more.

Just as Ethel experiences tension between her ambition and her domestic duty, so Isabel feels the 'conflict between literary and domestic demands'.[104] Yet Isabel's 'literary demands' are not professional in nature for she never aspires to publish her work. Rather, the fictional world that she creates appears so real to her that it holds a dangerous control over her imagination. Before her marriage to the clergyman James Frost, Isabel is most often figured as sitting apart from her family, imagining that she is her heroine Adeline, and coolly considering the suitability of the people around her

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[102] Sturrock, 'Literary Women of the 1850s', p.116.
[103] Charlotte Yonge, *Dynevor Terrace, or, the Clue of Life* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1898), p.125. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.
[104] Sturrock, 'Literary Women of the 1850s', p.117.

as characters for her story. When she is forced to engage in real life, when she becomes involved in the action of the other characters, her own fictional characters retreat and await her return to them in a 'pensive stillness' (*Dynevor,* p.172). The power of Isabel to create characters that appear to seep into real life is a skill that those around her recognise, even though most are unaware of her writing. For example, she appears to transform herself into a 'wood-nymph' when decorating a Christmas tree, which she turns into a 'magic bower', entrancing those around her. However, once she moves and interacts with others, the illusion is disrupted, and the men around her recognise the artifice of 'fire, wax and modern young ladyhood' (*Dynevor,* p.176).

The action of the narrative is set very specifically, in February 1848, during which Isabel visits Provence with the novel's hero Louis and becomes embroiled in the revolutionary uprising.[105] As Isabel becomes trapped by the 'hordes' outside the Hotel de Ville, Louis exclaims: 'We are actually becoming historical!' (*Dynevor,* p.212). Isabel, 'every inch a heroine', pacifies the crowd without speaking to them through the means of her elegance, class and beauty until they retreat to let her pass safely: 'There was a murmur of admiration, and more than one bow and muttered apology about necessity and the nation, as the crowd beheld the maiden in all her innate nobleness and dignity' (*Dynevor,* p.212). The power of Isabel's fantasy world, the fact that she can confidently play the heroine, saves her life here. As Zakreski notes, Yonge allows Isabel a 'precarious independence', in which she can 're-imagine her world'.[106] But this becomes problematic once Isabel marries. As Sturrock notes, Isabel is 'serenely indifferent to household management', leaving her husband to care

[105] For more on the 1848 uprising from the perspective of women's history, see William Fortescue, 'The Role of Women and Charity in the French Revolution of 1848: The Case of Marianne de Lamartine', *French History*, vol. 11, no. 1 (1997), pp.54-78.
[106] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour,* p.126.

for their troublesome children while she indulges in writing.[107] Not only does Isabel know 'nothing of management', she does 'not care to learn' (*Dynevor,* p.337). Describing a fantasy of her husband James as the hero of her romance, Isabel explains that '[i]t was much easier to line his tent with a tapestry of Maltese crosses, than to consider whether the hall should be covered with coca-nut matting' (*Dynevor,* p.338). Clearly, married life bores Isabel, and her boredom is made more evident when the narrator describes her thoughts on her matrimonial and maternal duties:

> she was willing to do what was fitting, and he [her husband James] ought not to expect her to be an absolute nursery-maid. Women must keep up the tone of their own minds, and she might be being useful to the world as well as to her own family. If he wanted a mere household drudge, why had he not looked elsewhere? (*Dynevor,* p.357)

In this passage, the narrator does not flinch from implied sympathy with Isabel's frustration at the tedium and boredom of her claustrophobic domestic circle. Isabel's fantasy world offers her not merely escapism, it is also an act of defiance, a signal to her husband that she refuses to be a 'mere household drudge' and, more subversively, that wifehood and motherhood are not the natural vocation of women, but rather roles that they must learn to perform.

However, just as Ethel must renounce her cherished studies, so Isabel must conform to the reality of wifehood and motherhood; she must let go of her romantic dream:

> And Isabel sighed, partly at the memory of the imaginary being for whom she had taken James, and partly at the future prospect, the narrow sphere, the choice between solitude and dull society, the homely toils that must increase, worn-out garments, perpetual alphabets, children always whining, and James always irritated, thinking her remiss (*Dynevor,* p.358).

Over the course of the narrative, Isabel resigns herself to her 'narrow sphere' of 'dull society', 'homely toils', 'whining' children and an 'irritated husband'. To return to Sanders's comments, marriage is indeed a 'self-inflicted' domestic trouble in this

[107] Sturrock, 'Literary Women of the 1850s', p.123.

novel.[108] Isabel's renunciation of her fantasy world is not, however, the end of her story. Although not ambitious for publication, when a Blind Asylum is in need of a donation, Isabel sells a travelogue to the *Western Magazine* and donates all of the money to the charity. As Zakreski notes, her writing is figured as an extension of her domestic work, managed around the more pressing demands of motherhood and marriage.[109]

We might recall that in *The Three Athelings*, Agnes initially took much pleasure in dressing up her manuscript in pretty ribbons, and in the same way, Isabel's story is described as appropriately feminine, being 'the prettiest little manuscript book tied with blue ribbon' (*Dynevor,* 293). However, when her husband loses his position as schoolmaster, Isabel's work becomes more serious as she considers selling *Chapel in the Valley* for the benefit of her family. Even within this context, however, Isabel figures herself as the heroine who needs rescuing, for she imagines her hero, 'whom all this time her imagination was exalting, as the hero who would free them from their distress' (*Dynevor,* p.382). Yet, her ambition is condemned by Louis, who tells her: 'I am afraid it does not answer for the wife to be the bread-winner' (*Dynevor,* p.382). The lesson that Louis wants Isabel to learn is that she cannot play both roles: she cannot be a worker and a wife. So, by the end of the novel, she tells him: 'I have been absorbed in my own pursuits, and not paid attention enough to details of management', going on to ask him to keep her manuscript out of her way, explaining that '[i]t has been a great tempter to me. It is finished now, and it might bring in something. But I can have only one thought now – how to make James happier and more at ease' (*Dynevor,* p.383).

[108] Sanders, 'Marriage and the Antifeminist Woman Novelist', p.30.
[109] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour,* p.125.

For Sturrock, 'the problem of the woman writer' is 'minimized' because, by the end of the novel, Isabel appears to completely accept her new roles of wife and mother, rejecting that of author. Indeed, the narrator describes how Isabel 'could not fail to be a happier woman' with her new focus in life, finding that 'never in all her dreamy ease had she been as cheerful and light-hearted as in the midst of hardship and rigid economy' (*Dynevor,* p.383). However, Isabel does continue to write in between domestic duties, fitting her profession around her family just as Margaret Oliphant described: 'writing ran through everything'.[110] What Isabel has learnt is not, as Louis wished, to give up her writing, but rather to pose as an amateur, to figure her writing as a hobby that does not threaten that traditional hierarchy of her family. It is because of this, not despite of it, that Isabel becomes a better writer, her verse becoming 'more terse and expressive' (*Dynevor,* p.419). As a result, her epic poem is finally published, the sale of which helps her struggling family, just as Isabel hoped it would. As Zakreski notes, this posing as an amateur 'enables Isabel as a professional author to maintain the appearance of respectable domesticity'.[111] What Isabel learns is not to prioritise the domestic, to renounce her writing in favour of motherhood, but to appear to do so while continuing to sell her work. In *The Clever Woman of the Family*, Yonge's most outspoken novel on the subject of literary women, she explores this tactic of amateurism even more openly than in *Dynevor Terrace.*

Rachel Curtis, the 'clever woman' of the title, is a young woman who, eager for a vocation, aspires to have her work published in the fictional magazine the *Traveller*. Ermine Williams, however, is the real 'clever woman' of the story: she publishes 'intelligent, educative, and morally sound' articles in the *Traveller* under

[110] Jay (ed.), *The Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant,* p.30.
[111] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour,* p.128.

the pen-name of 'The Invalid', and is temporarily promoted to the post of editor.[112] When Ermine (under the veil of anonymity) rejects Rachel's articles submitted to the *Traveller*, Rachel sets up an asylum for child lace makers who produce a journal which Rachel plans to edit. However, Rachel fails to notice the child abuse that becomes rife in her asylum and the resultant court case (in which Rachel is humiliated, but not charged) leads to her realisation that she is not, after all, a 'clever woman' and that her vocation is, in fact, wifehood.

Kim Wheatley has convincingly argued that Ermine and Rachel can be fruitfully read as distinct elements of the same 'clever woman'.[113] Indeed, Rachel is described as 'a grotesque caricature of what [Ermine] used to be' (*Clever Woman*, p.167), a reference to Ermine's Ethel-like childhood before she had learnt to control her 'cleverness'. As Ermine explains, Rachel 'is just what I should have been without papa and Edward [her brother] to keep me down' (*Clever Woman*, p.168). Although Rachel is considered by her family, and considers herself, to be 'the clever woman of the family' (a title which, as Sanders notes, ironically draws 'attention to the heroine's disruptive effect within the domestic unit'), Ermine is clearly the true 'clever woman' of the story.[114] This point is emphasised at the novel's conclusion when Rachel and her husband Alick agree that they would like their daughter Una to treat Ermine as a role model:

> If we are to show Una how intellect and brilliant power can be no snares, but only blessings helping the spirits in infirmity and trouble, serving as a real engine for independence and usefulness, winning love and influence for good, genuine talents in the highest sense of the word, then commend me to such a Clever Woman of the family as Ermine Keith (*Clever Woman*, p.547).

It is important to note here that Ermine's ideal qualities of 'usefulness' and 'influence for good', described in this passage, make her 'brilliant power' and 'intellect'

[112] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.123.
[113] Kim Wheatley, 'Death and Domestication in Charlotte M. Yonge's *The Clever Woman of the Family*', in *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 36, no. 4 (Autumn 1996), pp.895-915.
[114] Sanders, *Eve's Renegades*, p.60.

acceptable because they appear contained within the limitations of femininity. However, as Patricia Zakreski notes, Ermine's 'cleverness' in fact stems from her ability to manipulate her image, for she is the only character in the novel who achieves 'a literary career and a respectable domestic identity'.[115] What Rachel fails to learn is that her power lies in the potential to 'write her own authorial identity into being'.[116] Ermine's 'usefulness' and 'influence for good' are the qualities that Rachel must strive towards as she transforms herself from a wilful 'clever woman' into a suitable wife for Alick by the end of the novel.

The journey from ambitious girlhood to adult womanhood is as painful for Rachel as it is for Ethel in *The Daisy Chain*. Rachel, however, is twenty-five when the novel begins, old enough to have established ideas and prejudices which must be broken and remade in the image of 'Yonge's ideal of intellectual femininity', of Ermine Williams.[117] The Rachel we see at the close of the novel, the Rachel who has learnt to bend her will to this gendered ideal, is a meek and subdued version of the 'strong-minded' woman whom we encounter at the start: 'I really do not think', Rachel tells her husband in the final chapter, 'I ever was such a Clever Woman' (*Clever Woman,* p.547). This is a far cry indeed from the passionate call for independence with which the novel begins:

> Here am I, able and willing, only longing to take myself to the uttermost, yet tethered down to the merest mockery of usefulness by conventionalities […]. I must be a mere helpless, useless being, growing old in a ridiculous fiction of prolonged childhood, affecting those graces of so-called sweet seventeen that I never had […] but I am five-and-twenty, and I will no longer be withheld from some path of usefulness! I will judge for myself, and when my mission has declared itself, I will not be withheld from it […]. If it be only a domestic mission […] I would not despise it, I would throw myself into it. (*Clever Woman,* p.38)

[115] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.124.
[116] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.124.
[117] Sturrock, *"Heaven and Home"*, p.65.

Rachel's language, as Sturrock notes, echoes that of the narrator of Florence Nightingale's *Cassandra* (1852), who decries that the middle-class woman simply has 'nothing to do'.[118] Rachel's frustration is, therefore, 'part of the discourse of women's work at mid-century', and like George Eliot's frustrated heroines, and Ethel in *The Daisy Chain*, Rachel searches for a vocation, ambitious to 'throw' herself into a 'mission' for she simply has nothing to do.[119]

Critics have noticed the complexity of Rachel's journey from strong-minded 'spinster' to wife and mother. An early critic, Ethel Romanes, claimed that:

> the book is not an attack on clever women or writing women, but on presumption, overmuch talk, and silly contempt for authority. The story is not at all an attempt to prove that women were never to venture out of the beaten track.[120]

It is interesting to highlight here that once again, the accusation of being a 'silly' woman surfaces as a serious criticism, Romanes's criticism of 'overmuch talk' echoing Gatty's of talking 'too fast' in 'The Goose'. Despite her claim that Yonge was not attacking 'clever women', it is hard to ignore the severe punishment that characters like Rachel, who transgress the boundaries of acceptable femininity, are subjected to. As one contemporary of Yonge's noted:

> [Yonge] beats them; she binds them; she lets her other inferior creatures make butts of them; she sticks pins into them; she impales them; she makes them declare that it is 'so comfortable' to be impaled.[121]

Sturrock agrees; in her discussion of the links between Jane Austen's *Emma* (1816) and *The Clever Woman of the Family*, she notes that whereas Emma Woodhouse (another woman who displayed her 'cleverness') is punished for her social blunders

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[118] Sturrock, *"Heaven and Home"*, p.50.
[119] Sturrock, *"Heaven and Home"*, p.50.
[120] Romanes, *Charlotte Mary Yonge*, p.99.
[121] [Anonymous], 'Two Recent Novels', *The Nation*, vol. 1, no. 2 (13 July 1865), p.55, cited in Kim Wheatley, 'Death and Domestication', p.898.

with a few days of social exclusion and embarrassment, Rachel suffers serious physical illness and public humiliation during the trial in court.[122]

I want to pause here for a moment to consider the link between bodily health, women's 'cleverness' and disability in this novel, for physical disability and literary ability are intrinsically linked in *The Clever Woman of the Family*, and most obviously explored through the bodies of Ermine and Rachel. The disabled character in the Victorian novel offers a rich and complex subject for research; as Maria Frawley has noted, the mid-century was 'an era fascinated like no other with the figure of the invalid and the spectacle of sickness'.[123] Stoddard Holmes suggests that disability 'pervades' Victorian 'social discourse', as do disabled characters who are often stereotyped as 'angelic invalids' (such as Charles Dickens's Tiny Tim).[124] However, Charlotte Yonge in particular 'was drawn to the image of woman as invalid', and indeed, *The Daisy Chain* and *The Clever Woman of the Family* are centred upon seriously physically ill characters (male and female), to the extent that to enjoy a lifetime of rude health is the abnormal experience.[125] But the disability of women is particularly significant for Yonge; as Sanders notes, the immobility of Yonge's disabled women often seems suggestive of women's 'paralysed condition in society'.[126]

Clare Simmons has argued that Yonge shared with her contemporaries the tendency to 'use disabled people (or "invalids," as she terms them) as a metaphor. In all cases, the characters are able to see purpose in the sufferings that have given them

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[122] See Sturrock, *"Heaven and Home"*, pp.61-62, for an interesting exploration of the links between Yonge's novel and Jane Austen's *Emma.*
[123] Maria H. Frawley, '"A Prisoner on the Couch", Harriet Martineau, Invalidism, and Self-Representation', in David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder (eds), *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1997), p.174.
[124] Martha Stoddard Holmes, 'Victorian Fictions of Interdependency: Gaskell, Craik, and Yonge', *Journal of Literary Disability*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2007), p.29.
[125] Sanders, *Eve's Renegades*, p.207.
[126] Sanders, *Eve's Renegades*, p.62.

time for contemplation'. This is particularly the case in *The Clever Woman of the Family*; however, Yonge's 'use' of disability becomes complicated when it intersects with women's professionalism, an issue that is so central to this novel.[127] As Stoddard Holmes notes, this novel 'has the overt Christian message that disability is not an affliction but a blessing', but also that Yonge 'figures feminine disability as freedom from the professional and social limitations placed on a "normal" woman's body'.[128] Indeed, Ermine's status as an 'invalid' in fact allows her to mask her ambition and pursue a career covertly through pseudonymity. In other words, Ermine's physical status as an 'invalid' becomes a useful persona that she employs to negotiate a professional identity, a means through which she gets her work published and is able to support herself, her sister and her young niece. As Stoddard Holmes has suggested,

> By removing Ermine from what she calls 'the active work of life', her injury has forced her to support herself not by marriage or even, like her sister, by teaching, but by becoming a professional writer. Her disability and financial need combined allow the narrative to endorse her pleasure in publishing her essays under the pseudonym "The Invalid," while it makes Rachel's striving for publication and social reform (without the wisdom to do either well) as unwomanly and punishes her soundly.[129]

Rachel fails to learn that she needs to create an identity for herself in order to stand out in a literary marketplace 'crowded' with women writers, unlike Ermine's use of 'The Invalid' persona which offers her a way of making herself distinct, as well as remaining anonymous. As Frawley has noted, '"the invalid" functioned as a legitimate authorial identity', through which the career of authorship 'provided many with a way to demonstrate their usefulness as invalids and to embody a kind of exertion'.[130] Through her professional identity of 'The Invalid', Ermine aligns herself

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[127] Simmons, 'Introduction', p.23.
[128] Martha Stoddard Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction: Physical Disability in Victorian Culture* (Michigan, University of Michigan Press, 2004), pp.51-52.
[129] Stoddard Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction*, p.52
[130] Maria H. Frawley, *Invalidism and Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p.17 and p.41.

with a legitimate authorial persona that emphasised 'usefulness' and 'influence for good'.

The fact that Ermine contributes anonymously to the *Traveller* is hinted at throughout the novel but not confirmed until late in the narrative. The chapter in which Rachel and Ermine first meet, and in which the reader learns of Rachel's ambition, carries an epigraph from Elizabeth Barrett Browning's 'A Lay of the Early Rose' (1856):

> For I would lonely stand
> Uplifting my white hand,
> On a mission, on a mission,
> To declare the coming vision (*Clever Woman*, p.78).

This stanza points toward Rachel's desire to find a mission in life but also her specific mission of becoming a regular contributor to the *Traveller*. Almost immediately on first meeting, Ermine and Rachel begin debating an article by 'The Invalid'. Unknowingly, Rachel offers the article for perusal to its own author, but Ermine demurely and coyly declines the offer, preparing the reader for the revelation of 'The Invalid's' identity which will be exposed in the following chapter.

Yonge's point in juxtaposing these two characters from the outset is to present Rachel as the quintessential 'silly lady' novelist and Ermine as the serious writer who disguises her success by posing as an amateur. We might recall that Yonge viewed amateurism positively, noting that in 'former times' the 'amateur author' was one 'who had something to say and [was] desirous of saying it to the public at their own cost; nay, who thought it almost derogatory to accept any remuneration'.[131] The professional, for Yonge, was defined as the author who sought 'profits of the sale that is hoped for as a testimony of success'.[132] Yonge's comments are interesting in light of the presentation of Ermine, for she is clearly a professional writer (she and her

[131] Romanes, *Charlotte Mary Yonge*, p.190.
[132] Romanes, *Charlotte Mary Yonge*, p.190.

family depend upon her earning a living), but she has the demeanour of a genteel amateur through the identity of 'The Invalid', a persona which serves to detract from the necessity of engaging with the marketplace. Ermine matches George Eliot's ideal of a 'really cultured woman', one who 'does not write books to confound philosophers, perhaps because she is able to write books that delight them. In conversation she is the least formidable of women, because she understands you, without wanting to make you aware that you *can't* understand her' ('Silly Novels', pp.155-156). Although she generalises these qualities as common to both 'a really cultured woman, [and] a cultured man', the level of modesty described is presented as particularly appropriate for the woman writer.

Rachel, on the other hand, falls distinctly into one of Eliot's 'species' of 'silly lady' novelists: the one that she deemed the 'most pitiable […] the *oracular*' ('Silly Novels', p.148). Rachel fits Eliot's description because she attempts to use her articles to 'expound [her] religious, philosophical [and] moral theories' and yet, ultimately, she only exposes her own 'amazing ignorance' ('Silly Novels', p.155). As one character puts it, Rachel's 'principles [are] picked up from every catch-penny periodical, things she does not half understand, and enunciates as if no one had even heard them before' (*Clever Woman,* p.167). Ermine's criticism of Rachel's first article, 'Curatocult', demonstrates this point. 'Curatocult' is a word that Rachel has invented to describe 'that sickly mixture of flirtation and hero worship, with a religious daub as a salve to the conscience' (*Clever Woman,* p.104), and Ermine objects to the term both on grammatical and moral grounds, feeling uncomfortable with the disrespect for the clergy that it implies. Heedless of this criticism, Rachel reads her article aloud and the narrator's judgement of her first attempt at writing is as biting as any of George Eliot's literary criticism:

> The paper was in the essay style, […] something after the model of the Invalid's Letters; but it was scarcely lightly touched enough, the irony was wormwood, the gravity heavy and sententious, and where there was just thought or a happy hit, it seemed to travel in a road-waggon, and be lost in the rumbling of the wheels (*Clever Woman,* p.104).

Echoing the criticism of Eliot and Yonge, Ermine warns Rachel of the consequences of publishing her poor article: 'Is good to come of it?' she asks. Part of Rachel's ignorance, it is implied, stems from her ambition to influence through such articles, just as 'The Invalid' has influenced her:

> [I]t is to be the beginning of a series, exposing the fallacies of woman's life at present conducted; and out of these I mean to point the way to more consistent, more independent, better combined exertion. If I can make myself useful with my pen, it will compensate for the being debarred from so many more obvious outlets. I should like to have as much influence over people's minds as that Invalid for instance, and by earnest effort I know I shall attain it. (*Clever Woman,* p.105)

As with Gwendolen's misguided ambition in *Daniel Deronda,* Rachel suffers because of her egoism. Although she states that her motivation is to be 'useful with [her] pen', her ambition is in fact to have the kind of 'influence' over 'people's minds' that 'The Invalid' has, dispelling any claims of a truly higher motive: what Rachel really wants is to be as successful and influential as Ermine.

Having read her article aloud to Ermine and her nine year old niece Rose, Rachel leaves her manuscript with Ermine for her to proof-read, and she discusses the article with the child. Rose admits that she soon tired of Rachel's 'long story' and so decided to entertain her doll Violetta and pet toad Augustus with 'a fairy-tale out of [her] own head'. Ermine asks her niece:

> 'Indeed; and how did they like it?'
> 'Violetta looked at me all the time, and Augustus gave three winks, so I think he liked it.'
> 'Appreciated it!' said Aunt Ermine (*Clever Woman,* p.106).

Rose, reading aloud to an audience of two, mirrors Rachel, reading aloud her article, providing a microcosm of Rachel and Ermine's first clash over the quality and purpose of women's writing: Rachel having left Ermine, satisfied that the unwilling

critic 'appreciated' her article, and Ermine confounded that her strong criticism and discouragement were not at all heeded. Yonge employed her usual humour and affection for the child's imaginative world in mirroring Ermine's stunned reaction to Rachel's ignorance in the doll's glassy silence and the toad's sly winking, reflecting Ermine's own winking at the reader when she repeats Rachel's term, 'appreciated'. A link is forged, therefore, between Rose's childish 'made up' story and that of Rachel, serving to further denigrate and infantilise Rachel's first attempt at authorship.

With Rachel and Ermine juxtaposed in this way, Ermine's identity is revealed to the reader as she admits to her lover Colin Keith that she is, in fact, 'The Invalid'. Colin recognises descriptions of Ermine's childhood home in an article that Rachel has recommended to him from the *Traveller*, and he immediately suspects who 'The Invalid' may be. Ermine's choice of subject for this article is significant: she does not attempt to address pressing questions of social importance, as Rachel does, but rather draws a picture of her childhood home, thus writing on a suitably feminine subject. When Colin challenges Ermine about her secret profession, she justifies her job in feminine terms, playing the role of the coy authoress as Agnes Atheling does in Oliphant's *The Three Athelings*. As Sturrock has noted: '[Yonge] is compelled to stress the womanly in her version of the woman writer'.[133]

Women writers often masked their first step into the public sphere within acceptable domestic terms: George Eliot claimed that the title for her first novel had come to her whilst she slept; Yonge wrote in her family drawing room, whilst receiving comments and ideas from her mother; Florence Marryat claimed that she first started writing only as a distraction from nursing her sick children. So too for Ermine, as she tells Colin that she first picked up her pen, not for remuneration or

[133] Sturrock, 'Literary Women of the 1850s', p.124.

with ambitions of influencing the public (as in Rachel's case), but simply as a way of setting down a permanent record of her memories of family life. She claims that when approached by a London editor (whom she met through her brother), she declined all offers of making her writing public and indeed was only pushed to offer her articles for publication once her sister was no longer able to sustain the family on her governess's wage. The story of Ermine's step into writing is one of authorship as a homely, private and modest profession:

> I wrote down that description that I might live in the place in fancy; and one day, when the contribution was wanted, and I was hard up for ideas, I sent it, though I was loath to lay open that bit of home and heart. […] What began between sport and need to say out one's mind has come to be a resource for which we are very thankful (*Clever Woman,* pp.121-122).

There is a clear difference in motivation between Rachel and Ermine. Ermine emphasises that her initial intention was to keep her reminiscences private, and she only sold them for the good of her family, whereas Rachel writes in order to influence her readers. The implication, therefore, is that Ermine is professional because she needs to publish, yet she still retains the demeanour of the genteel amateur. For Ermine, earning money is a happy coincidence of publishing that she was quickly forced to rely upon as a regular source of income: 'I was forced to do whatever brought grist to the mill' (*Clever Woman,* p.313). Rachel slowly learns this lesson, acknowledging it as '[g]entleness is not feebleness, nor lowness lowliness. […] Superior natures [are] lowly and gentle!' (*Clever Woman,* p.175).

In her article on 'Authorship', Yonge advised aspiring women writers that '[m]agazines seem, at first sight, the safe region for trying the wings, but they are so overcrowded that rejection often only means that there is no suitable opening'.[134] It is notable that some decades after the Goslings had grown up and settled into their careers, Yonge still employed bird imagery when writing about women's ambition

[134] Romanes, *Charlotte Mary Yonge,* p.190.

('trying the wings'). Her comments that magazine publication in particular was a difficult market is certainly the experience of Rachel, who, despite hearing nothing in response to her 'Curatocult' article, nevertheless submits another 'two fat manuscripts', entitled 'Human Reeds' and 'Military Society'. As 'Authorship' suggested, hearing nothing from a periodical editor was a common experience for many women writers starting their careers, and yet Rachel begins to despair, and considers sending her work to the *Englishwoman's Hobbyhorse*, a sly reference to the progressive *Englishwoman's Journal.* It is at this point that Ermine is offered temporary editorship of the *Traveller* (while the current male editor is on holiday), and is finally able to reject Rachel's articles and frustrate her ambition of becoming a published author.

When Colin gently mocks Ermine for becoming 'an important woman' in her new role, Ermine once again minimises her success by commenting on 'how easy the step is into literary work' (*Clever Woman,* p.167), despite the fact that Rachel's experience has just proved to the reader that it can indeed be quite the opposite. However, even in the mundane and routine editorial task of rejecting an article, Ermine distances herself from any suggestion of authority: she asks Colin to write out Rachel's rejection letter, fearing her handwriting 'betrays womanhood' (*Clever Woman,* p.166). So, although Ermine does in fact make the decision to decline Rachel's article, it is a male hand that is wielded to do the deed. 'Curatocult' is, therefore, 'declined with thanks' (this being precisely the term that Yonge herself continually used as editor in the 'Notice to Correspondents' section at the end of each number of *The Monthly Packet*). When Rachel discusses her disappointment with Colin (not yet knowing he had written out her rejection letter), the demeanour of the amateur is once again emphasised, as Colin tells her that there is a great difference

between the woman who simply writes and publishes, and the woman who covets the position of 'authoress'. This is, of course, the difference between Ermine and Rachel. As Colin notes: 'The withholding of the name prevents well-mannered people from treating a woman as an authoress, if she do not proclaim herself one; and the difference is great between being known to write, and setting up for an authoress' (*Clever Woman,* p.175). Anonymity is figured here as a suitably feminine practice for it suggests that the woman writer is suitably modest.

Yet, Rachel does not renounce her ambition of authorship lightly and, finding the *Traveller* unresponsive, she sets up her own magazine through her lace maker's asylum, which she has called the Female Union for Englishwomen's Employment (FUEE). As Sturrock also notices, the FUEE is a barely concealed reference to the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women (SPEW), set up by the Langham Place group just five years before the publication of *The Clever Woman.*[135] Like the *Englishwoman's Journal,* which supported the work of the SPEW, Rachel sets up the *Journal of Female Industry* to support the work of the FUEE, and circulates a prospectus advertising it as an illustrated monthly which will 'contain essays, correspondence, reviews, history, tales' (*Clever Woman,* p.311). A significant aspect of the journal's attraction for Rachel is the editorial control that it would allow her:

> a domestic magazine, an outlet to all the essays on Curatocult, on Helplessness, on Female Folly, and Female Rights, was a development of the plan beyond her wildest hopes! No dull editor to hamper, reject or curtail! She should be as happy and as well able to expand as the Invalid herself (*Clever Woman,* p.229).

In this passage, Rachel imagines a 'domestic magazine' much like *The Monthly Packet,* which would afford her the editorial control of 'the Invalid herself'. Enthused by the possibilities, Rachel also ventures into writing 'a tale on the distresses of Woman, and how to help them, entitled "Am I not a Sister?"' (*Clever Woman,* p.253)

[135] Sturrock, 'Establishing Identity', p.274.

It is at this point in the narrative that Ermine reveals herself to be 'The Invalid' and the abuse at the asylum is discovered, resulting in the failure of Rachel's health and ambitions of authorship.

Yonge explored the clash between the roles of wife and worker in her fiction to a greater extent than George Eliot, and in this novel, Rachel learns that once she fails at authorship, she must resign herself to be married, as Isabel does in *Dynevor Terrace*. Rachel's journey from spinster to wife is complicated by her attraction to Ermine; the scenes involving these two characters often lend a strongly homoerotic charge to the narrative. The narrator describes the attraction between them as intellectual, 'a sort of natural desire to rub their minds one against the other' (*Clever Woman,* p.96), but the physicality of this description suggests a stronger magnetism than this, and it is notable that both characters strongly resist their fate of marriage. Clare Simmons has suggested that any homoeroticism latent in Yonge's fiction might be fruitfully read within the biographical context of the various intense female friendships that she experienced throughout her adult life.[136] Indeed, Georgina Battiscombe has claimed that Yonge based her descriptions of Rachel and Ermine on her own intense relationship with her literary mentor Marianne Dyson, whom Battiscombe describes as a 'complete spinster'.[137] As Tess Cosslett has noted, 'female friendship figures crucially at important turning-points of the narrative in the works of women writers', and this is certainly the case in the relationship between Ermine and Rachel.[138] For both characters, the turning-point of their story comes with marriage.

Rachel's attempts to deflect and resist Alick Keith's proposal are consistent but ultimately futile, for Alick proposes when Rachel is at her weakest (after the

[136] Simmons, 'Introduction', p.26.
[137] Battiscombe, *Charlotte Mary Yonge,* p.64.
[138] Tess Cosslett, *Woman to Woman: Female Friendship in Victorian Fiction* (Atlantic Highlands, NK: Humanities Press, 1988), p.3.

failure of the asylum), when she is 'thin and listless' (*Clever Woman,* p.430). Like Gwendolen in *Daniel Deronda,* Rachel is tempted to sell herself to provide for her family, for Alick offers masculine protection for her mother and sister in the wake of asylum disaster: 'This', Alick claims, 'is the way to put an end to it!' (*Clever Woman,* p.411). Rachel initially veils her rejection in terms of not deserving the happiness of married life: 'I do nothing but spoil and ruin […] I am too disagreeable […] nobody can bear me!' (*Clever Woman,* pp.410-411). Yet, what Rachel is actually resisting here is the fate of becoming man's 'help-meet', the 'drudgery' of married life that she has been resisting since the start of the novel and that Isabel dreads in *Dynevor Terrace* (*Clever Woman,* p.430).

Rachel's response to the prospect of married life is severe depression and nightmares: she becomes 'exceedingly depressed, restless, and feverish, and shrank from her mother's rejoicing' (*Clever Woman,* p.417). This state of mind is further exasperated by her crisis of faith, which Rachel admits to Alick by way of explanation for her unwillingness to get married: 'My faith – it is all confusion […] I do believe – I do wish to believe; but my grasp seems gone' (*Clever Woman,* p.419). Her continued refusal of Alick, however, becomes an impossibility once she realises that even godlessness will not dissuade this suitor. And yet, just as she resists the proposal, so Rachel attempts to delay the actual marriage during one last meeting with Ermine before her wedding day. In the following passage, Rachel pleads with Ermine to help her escape from her fate:

> Miss Williams, please look full at me, and tell me whether everybody would not think […] it a great escape for him if I gave him up […] if ever the thing is to be stopped at all, this is the only time […]. You are the only person who can help me! (*Clever Woman,* pp.427-428).

Rachel's fear of wifehood is disguised as she employs the language of self-sacrifice: 'Don't talk of what I wish […]. Talk of what is good for him' (*Clever Woman,* p.428).

Yet her cry for help in this passage ('help me!') suggests something of panic on her own behalf, rather than fear for Alick's future happiness.

As Rachel struggles with the reality of her impending marriage and Ermine struggles to help her come to terms with it, the scene becomes full of the physical tenderness that Sharon Marcus has argued 'lends […] an erotic charge' to other, similar fictional female friendships: '[Rachel] laid down her weary head on Ermine's lap, and Ermine bent down and kissed her' (*Clever Woman,* p.429).[139] It is only with Ermine that Rachel's real fear becomes fully expressed, exposing the last remnants of the 'strong-minded' woman who embraced her future of 'spinsterhood' at the beginning of the novel:

> I used to think it so poor and weak to be in love, or to want any one to take care of one. I thought marriage such ordinary drudgery, and ordinary opinions so contemptible, and had such schemes for myself. And this – and this is such a break down, my blunders and their consequences have been so unspeakably dreadful, and now instead of suffering, dying – as I felt I ought – it has only made me just like other women, for I know I cannot live without him, and then all the rest of it must come for his sake. (*Clever Woman,* p.430)

Rachel's lament echoes that of Isabel in *Dynevor Terrace,* who we may remember was appalled that her husband expected her to be 'a mere household drudge' (*Dynevor,* p.357). It also resembles the fear of George Eliot's artist-professionals who, in *Daniel Deronda* and *Armgart,* dread being 'ordinary', and seek an extraordinary life. For Rachel, the fate of becoming a wife is, literally, a fate worse than death ('dying – as I felt I ought') and it is Ermine who confirms that she must brave this fate as best she can: '"we are not the strongest creatures in the world, so we must resign ourselves to our fate and make the best of it." […] The effect of the conversation had been to bring Rachel to a meek submission' (*Clever Woman,* pp.430-431).

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[139] See Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p.77-78, for an interesting analysis of the bond between Rosamond and Dorothea in George Eliot's *Middlemarch.*

Yet, it is important to note that although Rachel suffers this fate, she is actually paired with one of the most feminised men in the novel. Although Alick Keith is a 'hero' before the action of the novel begins, he is feminised by the domestic setting of the novel, for his days of action are behind him, due to a 'nervous state of exhaustion', a state that is 'the common condition of [Yonge's] male characters'.[140] Rachel senses his languor and 'air of vacuousness' on their first meeting:[141]

> Very young indeed were both face and figure, fair and pale, and though there was a moustache, it was so light and silky as to be scarcely visible; the hair, too, was almost flaxen, and the whole complexion had a washed-out appearance. […] the long limbs had in every movement something of weight and slowness, the very sight of which fretted Rachel, and made her long to shake him (*Clever Woman*, p.146).

As Sanders notes, Rachel's failure to recognise true heroism in Alick is just one of her many mistakes,[142] but like the blinded Rochester in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847),[143] Alick is one of many 'crippled or feminized heroe[s]', whose disability makes him a 'manageable object for the heroine's affections'.[144] While recovering, Alick describes himself as 'the wretched monster [who] could do nothing but growl at his visitors' (*Clever Woman*, p.284), and as Wheatley has noted, this period of forced dependency serves to feminise Alick by stressing his reliance on others and capacity for bodily pain, leading to heightened sensitivity and emotion.[145] Furthermore, Alick's injury is significantly emasculating, losing his fingers during a battle in Delhi, for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross. In the following passage, Rachel and Alick's hands inadvertently meet as they both attempt to kill a fly:

> her hands descended on, what should have been fingers, but they gave way under her – she felt only the leather of the glove between her and the

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[140] Sanders, *Eve's Renegades*, p.102.
[141] Sanders, *Eve's Renegades*, p.102.
[142] Sanders, *Eve's Renegades*, p.102.
[143] See David Bolt, 'The Blindman in the Classic: Feminisms, Ocularcentrism and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*', *Textual Practice*, vol. 22, no. 2 (2008), pp.269-289.
[144] Sally Mitchell, 'Sentiment and Suffering: Women's Recreational Reading in the 1860s', *Victorian Studies*, vol. 21, no. 1 (Autumn, 1997), p.37.
[145] Wheatley, 'Death and Domestication', p.905.

> newspaper. She jumped and very nearly cried out, looking up with an astonishment and horror only half reassured by his extremely amused smile. "I beg your pardon; I'm so sorry - " she gasped confused (*Clever Woman,* p.182).

At this moment, Rachel realises her mistake in dismissing Alick as languid, for his missing digits suggest the heroism that earned him the Victoria Cross; yet Alick also appears to be symbolically castrated by Rachel's response here, an effect emphasised when he jokingly reassures her that he has left his fingers in Delhi, not underneath the handkerchief that Rachel used to kill the fly. The moment, however, leaves Rachel disturbed; she 'had to digest her discoveries at her leisure, as soon as she could collect herself after the unnatural and strangely lasting sensation of the solid giving way' (*Clever Woman,* p.182).

Alick compares his period of invalidism to Ermine's, yet Ermine's disability is not caused through an act of heroism on the battlefield, but rather through an accident in the home. Like Margaret May in *The Daisy Chain*, who is injured in an accident in the family carriage, Ermine's disability seems to symbolise 'the dangers inherent in the densely overcrowded, emotionally inflammable world of the Victorian household'.[146] Just as Rachel attempts to avoid marriage with Alick, so Ermine explains to her lover Colin that they cannot marry because her lower body is permanently damaged. Her explanation is as explicit as it can be: 'the explosion, rather than the fire, did mischief below the knee that poor nature could not repair, and I can just stand, and cannot walk at all' (*Clever Woman,* p.140). The fact that Ermine cannot be a sexual partner for Colin is reemphasised later in the chapter: 'You are pleased because my face is not burnt. […] But it would be a wicked mockery in me to pretend to be the wife you want' (*Clever Woman,* p.142). As Stoddard Holmes notes, in Yonge's fiction the disabled woman is often figured as '"passionless" and thus "marriageable,"' and so, ironically, it is Ermine's very lack of sexuality that

[146] Sanders, *Eve's Renegades,* p.61.

engenders her suitability for marriage.[147] Crucially, however, Ermine and Colin's marriage is left unconsummated; as is often the case in the Victorian novel, 'disabled women characters almost never become biological parents', and indeed the couple do not spend their honeymoon together.[148]

Ermine is thus kept permanently virginal, although she experiences motherhood through the adoption of an orphaned boy. Rachel, having submitted to her future as a wife, also becomes a mother and no mention is made of either woman continuing with their writing. Although Wheatley argues that it is motherhood that is the 'main source' of Rachel's transformation, her transformation in fact stems from her marriage, the fate that she most strongly resisted; motherhood simply confirms Rachel's domesticity and renunciation of a vocation away from the home, but her marriage is the catalyst for this change.[149] Suitably, it is Ermine who sums up Rachel's transformation as complete at the end of the novel: 'chief of all the pleasures has been the sight of Rachel just what I hoped, a thorough wife and mother, all the more so for her being awake to larger interests, and doing common things better for being the Clever Woman of the family' (*Clever Woman*, p.545). Unlike Isabel in *Dynevor Terrace*, Rachel does not continue writing and gives up all interests outside of her domestic roles. What Isabel and Ermine learn, however, is to present their ambitions in suitably feminine terms, and that to pose as amateurs offers a way of continuing professional success, though the narrative silence on Ermine's career suggests that even she gave up her authorship on marriage. This is the lesson that Rachel fails to learn, and is thus resigned to the roles which she most feared, that of wife and mother.

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[147] Stoddard Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction*, p.6
[148] Stoddard Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction*, p.6
[149] Wheatley, 'Death and Domestication', p.904.

**Conclusion**

Some fifteen years after the first number of *The Barnacle*, Charlotte Yonge and Christabel Coleridge sat down together to 'solemnly' eat a roast goose and agreed to stop producing the magazine. The work of the Goslings was merged into a column called 'Arachne and her Spiders' that was already running in *The Monthly Packet* and, as we have seen, most of the strongest contributors graduated from *The Barnacle* to *The Monthly Packet.* Yonge later wrote that she felt her work was perceived as 'goody goody' as the century drew to a close, but she had facilitated the careers of some of the next generation of women novelists. Furthermore, the identity of Mother Goose was suitable for her role of mentor during the 1860s, and complemented her identity of a 'dutiful daughter' by linking her to yet another familial role. By employing Mother Goose as a literary figure with which to define her public persona, Yonge was referencing a long history of female storytelling which was at once unthreatening and also deeply rooted in Victorian literary culture. However, Yonge as Mother Goose was a positive role model, and offered *The Barnacle* readers an empowered model to be admired. In the illustration for Michaelmas 1867, Yonge was figured as Mother Goose once more, standing on a copy of *The Barnacle* and balancing a globe on her broomstick: this image suggests an empowered fairy tale female writer, one who would inspire young women to seek their own careers.[150] In the space of a semi-public *The Barnacle*, Mother Goose was transformed from a figure of ridicule to one of admiration.

[150] Talairach-Vielmas, *Moulding the Female Body*, p.18.

Yet, as my discussion in the second part of this chapter has indicated, Yonge's representation of women's ambition in her fiction does not sit easily with her supportive editorial persona. In *The Daisy Chain*, Ethel learns to renounce her studies and to redirect her ambition toward a suitably feminine project, a project which allows her freedom but seems to trap her into the role of 'dutiful daughter'.

In *Dynevor Terrace*, Yonge presents a heroine who learns to perform feminine roles for the benefit of her family and her career. Isabel learns that she must attend to her wifely and maternal duties, but her writing does not suffer as a result, because authorship is, for Yonge, so compatible with the domestic sphere of women's work. By learning to play the roles of both wife and worker, Isabel finds that she improves in both. Finally, in *The Clever Woman of the Family*, Yonge juxtaposed a 'silly' novelist with a 'clever' one. Ermine is 'clever' because she, like Isabel, learns to play an amateur, while actually


**Figure 2.j. [Anonymous], [Opening Illustration], *The Barnacle*, vol. 17 (Michaelmas Number 1867).**

selling her work. Rachel fails in her ambition because she fails to conceive a 'self-created Self'[151] as Ermine does through her persona of 'The Invalid', and because she fails to understand how domesticity can be useful to her. Yonge was, as I mentioned in my Introduction, the longest running editor of the Victorian period, and although she adapted her persona during the early years of her career, she would always maintain both roles of 'dutiful daughter' and mentor. The persona of the 'dutiful daughter' also proved useful to Florence Marryat so that she, like Yonge, continued to use it even when she was well established in her profession.

[151] Linton, *My Literary Life*, p.99.

## Chapter Three: Florence Marryat

Honour and shame from no condition rise;

Act well your part: there all the honour lies.[1]

Florence Marryat used this epigraph from 'An Essay on Man' to preface her novel *My Sister the Actress* (1881), which she dedicated to her daughter, Eva Ross Church, a successful actress until her sudden death in July 1887.[2] The epigraph provides an apt starting point for my discussion of Marryat's negotiation of a professional identity for she (like George Eliot) defined professionalism by woman's commitment to acting 'well'. Although Marryat was writing for a very different market from both George Eliot and Charlotte Yonge, she shared with them the concept of women's professional identity as based upon excellence and hard work. The anonymous critic for *The Era* wrote that the 'doctrine' of *My Sister the Actress* was that 'an actress may without any loss of womanly feeling, or any sacrifice of self-respect, pursue her profession, and win for herself a position of independence and honour'.[3] Loss of 'womanly feeling' and 'sacrifice of self-respect' was, as we have seen, the specific concern of Charlotte Yonge as well, who warned women that they risked 'sacrificing' their 'womanly nature' by engaging in the 'manly dash' for a profession.[4]

So, like Eliot and Yonge, Marryat was concerned with how the female artist-professional might negotiate a public identity without compromising her femininity, and like Eliot, Marryat tended to explore issues pertaining to performance through the character of the female performer. Marryat's artist-professionals, like those I have discussed in Chapters One and Two, find posing as amateurs a useful tactic at the

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[1] Alexander Pope, 'An Essay on Man', in Christopher R. Miller (ed.), *The Rape of the Lock and Other Poems* (London: Penguin, 2003), p.122.
[2] See [Anonymous], 'Meetings of Public Companies', *The Pall Mall Gazette* (22 July 1887), [no page number given] and [Anonymous], 'Sporting News', *The Aberdeen Journal* (25 July 1872), [no page number given].
[3] [Anonymous], 'My Sister the Actress', *The Era* (22 October 1881), [no page number given].
[4] Romanes, *Charlotte Mary Yonge*, p.190.

outset of their professional lives, a practice which Marryat adopted in the early stages of her own career until she established herself as an author. However, once they achieve recognition as artists, Marryat's heroines revel in their success to an extent not seen in Eliot's or Yonge's fiction.

Like Yonge, Marryat was a successful novelist before she became an editor. As noted in the Introduction, Marryat wrote 'light and amusing literature', compared to the popular domestic fiction of Yonge and Eliot's high culture novels, and she perceived women's professionalism to be essentially domestic and specialised, as when she compared 'unravelling the plot' of a novel to the 'knitting [of] a sock' (*No Intentions,* p.291). Although Eliot's high culture model of professionalism was not practicable for popular authors, Marryat's concept of professionalism was not as different from Eliot's as it first appears, for both figured the woman artist working best at home, describing women's professionalism, as does Yonge, in largely domestic terms.

Throughout her early career, Marryat chose to pose as an amateur, encouraging the perception that she relied upon her father's reputation, and capitalising on the view that she had 'inherited the facile pen of her gifted father'.[5] The Victorian 'cult of authorship' led to an increasing 'commodification of the signature',[6] and for some women, this meant that it became increasingly difficult to find refuge in publishing anonymously, but for others who had a famous name, like Marryat, this was a trend that they could exploit: as George Eliot put it, 'I wrote anonymously while I was an unknown author, but I shall never, I believe, write anonymously again' (*GEL*: IV: 25-26). Whereas Eliot needed the protection that anonymity in the *Westminster Review* and *Blackwood's* afforded her, Marryat was

[5] Sarah A. Tooley, 'Some Women Novelists', *The Woman at Home*, vol. 6 (1897), p.190.
[6] Judd, 'Male pseudonyms and female authority in Victorian England', p.255.

able to practise signature for she had a name that she could use to her advantage: her father, Frederick Marryat, had been a well respected and well connected author-editor. Andrew Maunder has suggested that the success of Florence Marryat's first three novels (*Love's Conflict*, *Too Good for Him* and *Woman Against Woman*, all published in 1865), was largely built upon 'the back of her father's name', and it is this early construction of Marryat's professional identity that I focus upon in the first half of this chapter.[7] Later, I move on to consider how she adapted that persona for the role of editor and then explored the experience of the artist-professional in her fiction.

Having developed her career as a popular sensation novelist in the 1860s, Marryat was well placed to take on the editorship of the fashionable metropolitan magazine *London Society* in 1872. Like Charlotte Yonge in *The Barnacle*, Marryat was very visible within the pages of her magazine through the use of illustrations and editorial notes. Whilst new to editorship, Marryat also began to explore her long-held interest in spiritualism, at a time of increasing public debate over the veracity of certain high-profile spirit mediums. Their work resembled that of the performer because séances were so theatrical: as Alex Owen states, the 'entire business of mediumship [was] superb theatre', and the séances 'resembled nothing more than masterpieces of dramatic orchestration with young girls in the starring roles'.[8] For these mediums, as for Florence Marryat and the other author-editors considered here, the home was their place of work, the domestic was professional. Within the context of the 'edging out' that women experienced in the debate over the professions that I discussed in my Introduction, this domesticiation of professional life is important for it indicates that Marryat, like Yonge and Eliot, was attempting to position the woman artist as a professional by exploiting the Victorian notion of domesticity as woman's

[7] Maunder , 'Introduction', *Domestic Sensationalism,* p.vii.
[8] Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), p.54.

special sphere of influence. In the pages that follow, I analyse Marryat's spiritualist


**Figure 3.a Letter from Harry Furniss to Florence Marryat (19 March 1875), Marryat Family Papers, MSS. 104 (GENM), Beinecke Library, Yale University. Uncat.**

novel *Open! Sesame!*and the accompanying texts serialised in *London Society* in order to demonstrate that Marryat's management of the serialisation of her own novel served to capitalise upon her emerging professional identity as a 'spiritualist editress', as an editor whose public persona was defined by her interest in spiritualism. Marryat's celebrity, begun in the late 1860s, was developed and maintained largely through the illustrations of *London Society*. As in the depiction of Yonge in *The Barnacle,* it is not clear how much involvement Marryat had in the design of the illustrations; however, this does not detract from the fact that her persona in these illustrations helped to crystallise her identity as an editor. Indeed, correspondence between Marryat and the illustrator Harry Furniss suggests that she wielded a considerable amount of editorial control. In one letter, Furniss writes that his 'fiery

furnace [was] red hot' because one of his illustrations had been significantly altered when *London Society* went to print.[9] He concludes his letter with 'an allegorical squiggle (figure 3.a) of what I would like to say to you', and in his picture, Marryat is figured as Queen, judging the artwork of her subjects, throwing most of their efforts in a waste paper basket which sits beside her desk. In the distance, the tomb stones of 'ART' are visible. In another sketch (figure 3.b) , which is not signed but is in a similar style to that of Furniss's


**Figure 3.b Unsigned letter to Florence Marryat [n.d.], Marryat Family Papers, MSS. 104 (GENM), Beinecke Library, Yale University. Uncat.**

letter, the editor is seen to be Marryat wielding a whip, a male contributor cowering before her, pleading forgiveness. A caption reads: 'I PRAY THE FORGIVENESS. It was the Spirits moved me.'[10] Away from this personal correspondence, Marryat's character of 'editress' was most often figured in the home in the magazine, and so her professionalism was, like Yonge's persona of Mother Goose, defined as firmly rooted within the domestic sphere, and, like Yonge's brand of literary professionalism, Marryat was playfully represented as powerful in her magazine, forging a kind of 'self-created Self' as George Eliot did.[11]

[9] Letter from Harry Furniss to Florence Marryat (19 March 1875), Marryat Family Papers, MSS. 104 (GENM), Beinecke Library, Yale University. Uncat.
[10] Unsigned letter to Florence Marryat [no date given], Marryat Family Papers, MSS. 104 (GENM), Beinecke Library, Yale University. Uncat.
[11] Linton, *My Literary Life*, p.99.

However, Marryat's empowerment was of a different nature from Yonge's because she was shown to step out of the home and into the marketplace in a very public way, being figured in one illustration as hanging her contributors out for sale in *London Society*'s shop window (see figure 3.d). As I suggest in my Conclusion, Marryat seems to have anticipated the professional confidence of the New Woman of the 1880s and 1890s, and it is perhaps no surprise that in this illustration she literally emerges out of the home and into the shop window, an image which would not be feasible for George Eliot to use in the 1850s or for Charlotte Yonge in the 1860s. This suggests that while Victorian domestic ideology may have proved useful at mid-century for professional women, it was perhaps limiting for the women of the *fin-de-siècle* who were working within the rapidly changing professional climate of New Journalism and the New Woman. However, despite her venture into the marketplace, Marryat's professional identity, like Yonge's, largely remained bound to the domestic sphere. I would like to suggest that this was not necessarily as limiting as it may appear.

Grounding my discussion of Marryat's public identity within the context of her spiritualism and increasing professional confidence, the second part of this chapter examines the woman artist-professional in her fiction. Drawing on Marryat's actress heroine in her novel *My Sister the Actress* (1881), and literary women in *Her World against a Lie* (1878) and *A Rational Marriage* (1899), I demonstrate that she shared with George Eliot the concept of professionalism as based upon excellence in art, but that Marryat was more forthright in emphasising women's desire to earn money and their right to enjoy their success. Limits of space only allow examination of one of Marryat's many theatre novels of the 1880s. *Facing the Footlights* (1883) and *Peeress and Player* (1883) are fascinating companion texts to *My Sister the Actress* to which I

am unable to dedicate space here. As in George Eliot's and Charlotte Yonge's fiction, in Marryat's novels it is those women who initially pose as amateurs who become successful professionals because they have learnt to turn domesticity to their advantage when creating an identity. Furthermore, Marryat shared a concern with Eliot and Yonge over how women might balance the demands of domestic duty and the continuation of a career once married. We have seen that Yonge addressed this question more directly than Eliot and that, in general, for her it was those women who learn to perform domesticity who were able to reconcile family life with a professional career. For Marryat, however, the role of wife often replaces that of worker: her heroines seem unable to maintain both roles, and thus either stop working once married or the question of their work is simply not mentioned after marriage, which tends to be the case in Eliot's fiction also. Avoiding marriage altogether, like Yonge's heroines, does not seem to be an option for Marryat's. To understand fully Marryat's conception of women's professionalism, however, we must first place it within the context of her early construction of a public identity as a dutiful daughter and committed mother.

**Unravelling Plots and Knitting Socks**

In an interview for *The Woman at Home* magazine in 1894, Marryat claimed that she wrote her first novel to distract herself whilst nursing her children through scarlet fever. Two years later, in Helen Black's *Notable Women Authors of the Day*, she spoke again about her motivations for a literary career, carefully framing her literary ambition in terms of her domestic duty. Black wrote that *Love's Conflict* 'was written under sad circumstances. Her children were ill of scarlet fever […] and it was in the intervals of nursing these little ones that, to divert her sad thoughts, she took up

her pen'.[12] Like Charlotte Yonge, who always placed professional writing within the context of domestic duty, Marryat repeatedly returned to her roles of wife and mother to feminise her persona. But as Beth Palmer notes, this 'narrative of maternal devotion obscures the fact that economic necessity was more likely a reason for Marryat's taking up her pen'.[13] Indeed, Marryat herself wryly commented that being married to 'a Major on half-pay, with eight children, it would not need much perspicuity [*sic*] on the part of the public to guess from whom the butter that spread the bread came'.[14] So, while Marryat did emphasise her sense of domestic duty when describing her career, she also drew attention to the fact that when her husband had failed to support his family, she was able to step into the role of breadwinner. Andrew Maunder notes that while Marryat may have 'presented herself within the lady-like frame of self-sacrifice and familial devotion, deemed acceptable for professional women, she also challenged it'.[15] However, Maunder's comments need qualifying, for while Marryat's novels do present a challenge to certain aspects of the 'woman question' (for example, her novels unflinchingly represented violence against women and children), like Charlotte Yonge, she used the 'lady-like frame work' in order to facilitate her own career, rather than challenge that framework itself, as the New Woman novelists tended to do.

As a spiritualist, Marryat infused descriptions of her career with a sense of the ghostly. In the same interview with Black, she said:

> I never sit down deliberately to compose or think out a plot. […] They [her novels] appear to me like a set of houses, the first of which is fully furnished; the second finished, but empty; the third in the course of building; till the furthest in the distance is nothing but an outline. […] I never feel at home with a plot till I have settled the names of the characters to my satisfaction. As soon as I have done that they become sentient beings in my eyes, and seem to

[12] Helen C. Black, *Notable Women Authors of the Day* (London: Maclaren, 1906), p.86.
[13] Palmer, 'Strategies of Sensation and the Transformation of the Press', p.197.
[14] Black, *Notable Women Authors of the Day*, p.86.
[15] Maunder, 'Introduction', *Domestic Sensationalism*, p.xiv.

> dictate what I shall write. I lose myself so completely whilst writing, that I have no idea, till I take it up to correct, what I have written.[16]

In this passage, Marryat linked the act of writing to the home in a very physical sense: she described her novels in terms of bricks and mortar, as if she were an architect designing a street in one of the new fashionable suburbs that had sprung up around London at mid-century. But she also figured herself as a spirit medium: her description of losing herself whilst writing suggests the act of automatic writing, in which a possessed spirit medium writes out ghostly messages from the spirit world. By linking herself to a spirit medium in this way, Marryat further domesticated her professional identity, for the work of the medium was always carried out in the home.

Marryat's description of writing as a distraction whilst nursing sick children is very similar to a passage in *The Nobler Sex* (1892), a book which Talia Schaffer has described as 'a searing account of [Marryat's] own suffering as a physically and emotionally abused woman fighting to retain custody of her children and effect a divorce without destroying her reputation'.[17] Because of the strongly autobiographical nature of this novel, I want to pause here briefly to consider it as relevant to my discussion of Marryat's concept of professionalism. Narrated in the first person, *The Nobler Sex* traces the life of Mollie Malmaison, whose career follows the pattern of Marryat's almost exactly. Like Marryat, Mollie marries when very young and moves abroad to be with her husband (Mollie to Africa, Marryat to India). She returns to England alone and takes up writing whilst nursing her sick children, a career which her husband approves of because he considers it 'ladylike occupation which could be carried on in the strictest privacy'.[18] Mollie then moves to London to pursue her writing career, divorces her first husband, and marries a second, before taking to the

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[16] Black, *Notable Women Authors of the Day*, p.87.
[17] Talia Schaffer, *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes, Literary Culture in Late-Victorian England* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2000), p.41
[18] Florence Marryat, *The Nobler Sex* (New York and London: Street and Smith, [no date given]), p.94. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

stage as both actress and orator. In Chapter One, I described how Marryat likened the act of writing to domestic hobbycraft, linking the process of writing a novel to the knitting of a sock: '[k]nitting a sock and unravelling the plot of a sensational novel are two very similar things' (*No Intentions,* p.291). Similarly, Mollie describes writing in the same terms, and like Marryat, infuses her language with a suggestion of the ghostly:

> I do not know what I intended to write – verses, perhaps, or a little society tale – but as soon as I put pen to paper, something took possession of me that I had never felt before, and thoughts, and incidents, and descriptions of scenery and character seemed to pour from my brain, without any volition of power to prevent them. […] I sat, far into the night, fascinated by the ease of my new employment – never stopping, it seemed to me, for an idea, and feeling as if I could go on writing for ever (*Nobler,* pp.86-87).

In this passage, Mollie describes a stream of unconscious thoughts, but actually writes from her own experience and observation, just as Marryat did when she told Black that she set out to 'study people, nature, nature's way, and character, and then […] let the world know what she thought'.[19] So, while both Mollie and Marryat stress that they are not in control of their writing, that writing pours out of them onto the page in an unconscious way, their actual writing practice, in that they write from their own observations, actually accords with Eliot's ideal of the women who 'wrote what they saw, thought, and felt', being 'intelligent observers of character and events' ('Woman in France', pp.9-14). So, despite their differences as authors and editors, Marryat agreed with Eliot that women had a 'speciality' for observation, when she told Black that she deliberately set out to study nature and character, and presented her writing as valuable because it was defined in these terms ('Woman in France', p.9).

Mollie's thoughts on the representation of women in fiction help to illustrate this point. In a digression from the main plot, Mollie attacks the sensation novelist Ellen Wood (a rival of Florence Marryat's) as a 'pseudo-moralist', arguing that

[19] Black, *Notable Women Authors of the Day,* p.87.

Wood's extremely popular novel *East Lynne* (1861) did not realistically portray the heroine's sexual temptation and fall (*Nobler,* p.186). Summarising Wood's plot, Mollie claims that it is 'utterly untrue to nature' to suggest that a woman would abandon her home and husband if she did not think herself in love with her seducer (*Nobler,* p.187). *East Lynne* was, as Wynne has pointed out, one of the cornerstone novels of the sensation genre and the best selling book of the century,[20] but Marryat's narrator accuses Wood of plagiarising the plot of *East Lynne* from Annie Marsh's *The Admiral's Daughter* (1844). Yet, despite the fact that Marryat herself wrote sensation literature, her narrator claims that:

> I do not write this to excuse my own conduct [Mollie is, like Wood's heroine, a 'fallen woman'], but only to show how different Nature is from Art.
>
> Novelists write as they *imagine* things to be. Happily, perhaps, they have had no personal experience of the truth.
>
> *I* write of what I know and have done (*Nobler*, p.188).

Mollie justifies the more sensational details of her own story by evoking woman's special capacity for observation, something that Eliot had championed: 'what I know and have done'. Mollie's language here may remind us of Eliot's when she wrote to John Blackwood that she would not compromise her vision for her fiction to satisfy the reading public:

> My artistic bent is directed not at all to the presentation of eminently irreproachable characters, but to the presentation of mixed human beings, in such a way as to call forth tolerant judgement, pity and sympathy. And I cannot stir a step aside from what I *feel* to be *true* in character (*GEL*: II: 229).

In Marryat's novel, the narrator tries to collapse the sensational-realism binary that placed writers like Eliot at one end of the cultural spectrum, and writers like Marryat (and Mollie) at the other. Mollie refuses, like Eliot in her letter to Blackwood, to present anything other than the truth of human beings as she sees it. However, Mollie's distancing herself from other sensation writers suggests a desire to be placed in the same sphere as Eliot, rather than with Ellen Wood. Marryat stresses, like Eliot,

[20] Wynne, *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine,* pp.60-62.

that women write best when they write from their own experience, but sidesteps the issue that the conventions of sensationalism relied more upon melodrama than realism.

While *The Nobler Sex* offers some insight into Marryat's thoughts on authorship, the handling of her first publication is also useful in terms of how she negotiated a public persona. The Bentleys had published eleven of Frederick Marryat's novels and Florence made use of this connection by approaching them to publish her first book. They marketed *Love's Conflict* aggressively, '"puffing" its author's literary pedigree as the daughter of "Captain Frederick Marryat. R. N.".'[21] As Maunder notes, despite her two marriages, Marryat always used her maiden name for publications, and as such her professional persona, like Charlotte Yonge's, was initially built upon an image of 'daughterly devotion', for she 'clung to her maiden name, believing that it gave her an air of propriety and a certain lustre'.[22] This strategy achieved the desired effect; *The Athenaeum* led the praise of *Love's Conflict* with explicit reference to Marryat's father: 'the memory of the late Captain Marryat, dear to all who appreciate well told tales of thrilling adventure, suffers no dishonour by the dedication to him of his daughter's first experience in fiction'.[23] Most critics were more cautious in their praise because *Love's Conflict* was sensational, the plot involving the suggestion of pre-marital sex and scenes of seduction.[24] Indeed, Bentleys' reader Geraldine Jewsbury thought that *Love's Conflict* contained 'great cleverness in parts', but that on the whole it was an 'utter violation of good taste'.[25]

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[21] Maunder, 'Introduction', *Domestic Sensationalism,* p.xvii.
[22] Maunder, 'Introduction', *Domestic Sensationalism,* p. xix.
[23] [Anonymous], 'New Novels', *Athenaeum* (11 February 1865), p196.
[24] Palmer, 'Strategies of Sensation and the Transformation of the Press', p.197.
[25] Maunder, 'Introduction', *Domestic Sensationalism,* p. xvi. For a discussion of Jewsbury's influence as a reader for Bentley see Jeanne Rosenmayer Fahnestock, 'Geraldine Jewsbury: The Power of the Publisher's Reader', in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction,* vol. 28, no. 3 (December 1973), pp.253-272.

The Bentleys' manipulation of Frederick Marryat's respected legacy was a strategy that Florence went on to adopt throughout her literary career and beyond. For example, when she opened a 'School of Literary Art' in 1899, the headline on the advertising pamphlet fully exploited the Marryat family name, linking Florence's first book to her father's: 'Author of "Love's Conflict," etc, etc, and Daughter of the late Capt. Marryat, R.N., C. B., Author of "Peter Simple," etc., etc.'.[26] The hugely popular *Peter Simple*, a seafaring tale following the adventures of a young midshipman, was a very different book from Marryat's sensational romance *Love's Conflict*, but by linking the two, this pamphlet suggested a shared literary pedigree between father and daughter that Marryat clearly profited from. Yet, while the headline evoked the Marryat family legacy, the advertisement itself concentrated upon Florence's experience and skill:

> FLORENCE MARRYAT, being the author of more than seventy successful works of fiction, and having fulfilled the positions of Editor, Reviewer, and Journalist, is capable of deciding, after a very short time, whether a pupil has any talent for writing, and if so, of turning it to the best account.[27]

So, while at times Marryat used her father's name and posed as an amateur, this 'Prospectus' demonstrates that when she became established in her career, she was unafraid to highlight her own business acumen and success in a way that Charlotte Yonge was reluctant to do.

As Palmer notes, Marryat further defined her persona by 'familial devotion' through the publication of *The Life and Letters of Captain Marryat* (1872).[28] In this biography, Marryat arranged and edited her father's letters, interspersing them with her own commentary. For example, in a chapter which included a sub-section on 'The Effects of Sensational Literature', Marryat reproduced a letter 'written by Captain

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[26] Prospectus for 'School of Literary Art', [no publication details given], held at the British Library.
[27] Prospectus for 'School of Literary Art'.
[28] Beth Palmer, 'Florence Marryat, Theatricality and Performativity', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, vol. 8 (2009), p.6.

Marryat himself on the bad effects of sensational literature'.[29] In this letter, Marryat had made a very minor point that the freedom of the press should be ideally valued over notions of 'literary taste'. While suggesting that she agreed with her father's judgement of the 'bad effects of sensational literature', Marryat was careful to emphasise her father's point that 'the liberty of the press is so sacred that, rather than any interference should restrict it, it has been considered better that a little licentiousness should be passed over'.[30] So, Marryat clearly made the most of her father's reputation, and linked it with her own through the publication of this biography, but she also used this authority to justify her own position as a sensationalist.

In the early 1870s Marryat began to act as her own agent and quickly became 'well able to hold her own in the male world of magazine editors and journalists'.[31] She also became frustrated by her inability to command the same level of fees as her rivals and eventually decided to retain the copyright to her novels as well as the overseas rights.[32] This careful handling of the terms and conditions of her professional role is significant because Marryat shouldered the financial burden of her family. Yet, in her early correspondence with Bentley, Marryat presented herself as rather naive, meekly accepting his suggestions and adhering to his advice. For example, in one letter concerning the cover design and binding of *Love's Conflict*, Bentley wrote that 'you will shortly see yourself before the public in the gay uniform of the 1 or 2/- volume', referring to the brightly coloured cheap blue editions.[33] As Palmer notes, Bentley objectified Marryat in this letter by equating the physical body of the woman

[29] Florence Marryat, *The Life and Letters of Captain Marryat*, 2 vols (London: R Bentley and Son, 1872), vol. 1, p.184.
[30] Marryat, *The Life and Letters of Captain Marryat*, pp.185-186.
[31] Maunder, 'Introduction', *Domestic Sensationalism*, p.xiii.
[32] Maunder, 'Introduction', *Domestic Sensationalism*, p.xiii.
[33] Letter to Mrs Ross Church from Richard Bentley (20 May 1868), Bentley Archives, British Library, Reel 41, Volume 84-85.

with that of her work: it was not 'you will shortly see your novel before the public', but 'yourself'. In this way, Marryat was figured as a product to be consumed, like an actress displayed on stage, who requires a 'gay uniform' in order to play out her role. However, as Palmer rightly points out, the 'jovial domination' that Bentley employed in his letters does not mean that Marryat was manipulated or dominated by her publisher, but rather that 'the role of literary *ingénue* was helpful to her' whilst she was establishing her career.[34]

In her discussion of Marryat's adoption of 'the role of literary *ingénue*', Palmer reads the short story 'The Ghost of Charlotte Cray' (1883) as 'a re-working of her constraining early relations with Bentley and of authorial revenge on a controlling publisher'.[35] Vanessa Dickerson regards this story as one of a number of women's ghost stories in which 'avenging spirits' can be seen to 'clearly mirror their creator's own desires' to 'avenge a keenly felt deprivation, especially when that deprivation is financial'.[36] In 'The Ghost of Charlotte Cray', the publisher Mr Sigismund Braggett abuses his position of power by encouraging the admiration of Charlotte Cray, a 'clever woman' whose books he publishes and for whom he feels nothing. The narrator describes Charlotte as: 'an authoress – not an author, mind you, which term smacks more of the profession than the sex – but an "authoress", with lots of the 'ladylike' about the plots of her stories and the metre of her rhymes.'[37] It is interesting to note here that the difference between 'author' and 'authoress' is important as highlighting that the term 'authoress' places 'delicate emphasis on the specialness of

[34] Palmer, 'Florence Marryat, Theatricality and Performativity', p.4.
[35] Palmer, 'Strategies of Sensation and the Transformation of the Press', p.207.
[36] Vanessa Dickerson, *Victorian Ghosts in the Noontide: Women Writers and the Supernatural* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1996), p.146.
[37] Florence Marryat, 'The Ghost of Charlotte Cray', *Victorian Secrets*, [http://www.victoriansecrets.co.uk/pdfs/ghost-of-charlotte-cray.pdf, accessed 06.07.2009], p.1. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

women', avoiding the 'professional neutrality of "woman writer".'[38] Braggett courts Charlotte 'because she was useful to him, and did odd jobs that no one else would undertake, and for less than any one else would have accepted', rather like George Eliot at the *Westminster Review* ('Cray', p.2).

However, when Charlotte suddenly dies, she haunts Braggett's offices until he feels a 'dread of re-entering his office [which] amounted almost to terror' ('Cray', p.8). The result of Charlotte's persistent haunting is that Braggett 'resolved to resign his active share of the business, and devote the rest of his life to [his wife]' ('Cray', p.11). Given Marryat's interest in spiritualism, it is perhaps no surprise that Charlotte's haunting is figured as so powerful, driving a male publisher out of his place of work so that he seeks refuge in the private sphere. By concluding with the male editor driven out of his office by his female contributor, this story not only represents an attempt to upset the separate spheres ideology (the public figure retreats into the private), but also foreshadows the increasingly empowered position of the New Woman writer, for the ghost of Charlotte is a flickering and disturbing presence in the office space. As I discuss in more detail in my Conclusion, the New Woman of the 1880s and 1890s was even more visible in the literary marketplace than her mid-Victorian predecessors. Charlotte's ghostly presence in her editor's office seems to represent the New Woman's encroachment into the male domain of the publishing house, and wider professional life.

Despite this outpouring of 'authorial revenge on a controlling publisher', the Bentleys were in fact instrumental in developing Marryat's career, for when they bought *London Society* in 1872 she was secured in the post of editor. Living in London helped Marryat as it did George Eliot, and once in London, Marryat increased

[38] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p.74.

her output of journalism, writing for a number of newspapers and using a variety of publishers, including Routledge, Tinsley and Chatto and Windus. So, Marryat shared with George Eliot the benefit of living at the heart of London's literary circle, although the radical intellectual circle to which Eliot belonged was very different from the group of spiritualists and sensation novelists with whom Marryat mixed. We saw in the Introduction how Marryat gained her position as editor and that her name was aggressively marketed, confirming her status as a showcase editor.[39] *London Society: a Monthly Magazine of Light and Amusing Literature* was one of the established metropolitan monthlies that had sprung up during the boom in the periodical press during the 1860s. Like the *Westminster Review,* the title '*London Society*' emphasised the centrality of the magazine, placing it at the heart of the capital. But unlike the *Westminster,* which defined itself by radical politics and intellectual debate, *London Society*'s house style was centred upon 'light' and 'amusing' literature, the kind of 'spiritual gin' that Eliot abhorred.[40] With her new job, and the increased opportunities for developing her celebrity that it promised, Marryat's professional identity significantly altered, and it is to this editorial persona that I now turn.

[39] Fraser, Green and Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical*, p.86.
[40] Eliot, 'Authorship', p.178.

**The Character of Spiritualist Editress**

In the Introduction I mentioned an article published in *London Society* called 'A Reception in Bohemia' (1874). This article describes all the fashionable members of London society attending the 'at home' of 'Mrs Rossington' (a pun on Marryat's first married name of 'Ross Church'). 'Mrs Rossington' is described as 'a novelist, the editress of the leading illustrated magazine [whose] novels are even more popular in America than on this side of the water'.[41] As this article suggests, and Palmer confirms, Marryat's editorial persona was thus defined by 'ambivalently female Bohemian or erotic qualities'.[42] But like Charlotte Yonge in *The Barnacle*, Marryat's persona was largely negotiated through the illustrations of her magazine. Illustrations were an important aspect of *London Society*'s appeal and central to the magazine's house style. Unlike Yonge and Eliot, who set out their plans for their magazines in editorial prefaces, Marryat did not introduce herself to her

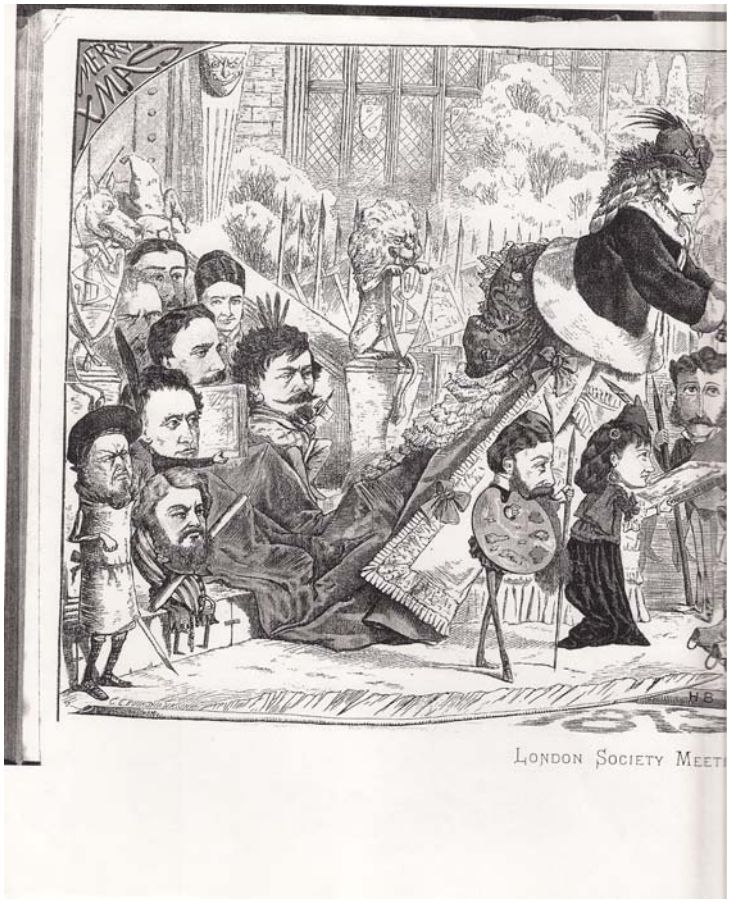


**Figure 3.c. 'London Society Meeting a Jolly Time',** ***London Society,*** **vol. 24 (December 1873).**

[41] Goodfellow, 'A Reception in Bohemia', p.133.
[42] Palmer, 'Strategies of sensation and the transformation of the Press', p.217.

readers in the first number that she edited. Yet her editorship was ‘puffed’ in the wider periodical press: by June 1872, few readers of metropolitan magazines could have been in doubt as to who the new editor of *London Society* was. Without the formal introduction of a preface, the first time Marryat appeared in her editorial role was in December 1873, in an illustration called ‘London Society Meeting a Jolly Time’. This was the first glimpse the reader got of their new celebrity editor (figure 3.c). The illustration depicts the New Year, represented by the giant female figure, seeing out the old, represented by a giant old man smoking a cigar (not visible in figure 3.c). It is perhaps no coincidence that the persona of times past is an old man, and that the New Year, representing the new era of *London Society* and its future, is represented by a young woman, underneath whom the new editor stands, carrying a copy of the Christmas number of *London Society* in her hands. Like Yonge who, while the central figure in *The Barnacle* illustrations, was also depicted alongside her contributors, Marryat is depicted as part of a team, for all *London Society*’s contributors are gathered together. Most of them are male, but there are two women: the illustrator M. E. Edwards is just visible at the back of the group, and Marryat standing at the front of the image, in distinctively elaborate dress that would remain the same in every illustration of her.

Holiday numbers such as this one (the one Marryat carries in her hands in figure 3.c) were particularly important to magazines like *London Society*, for they provided editors with an opportunity to boost sales and attract new contributors and readers. Marryat's first Christmas number was a chance to make her mark as editor, replacing the traditional editorial platform for addressing the reader such as the preface. This was only the second time that Marryat appeared in an illustration since becoming editor, and she is shown in her distinctive style and dress once more: she is now instantly recognisable, strengthening her identity as a celebrity editor. In this illustration (figure 3.d), the magazine is figured as a shop. The illustrator, George Cruickshank Junior, sits at the bottom of the page,

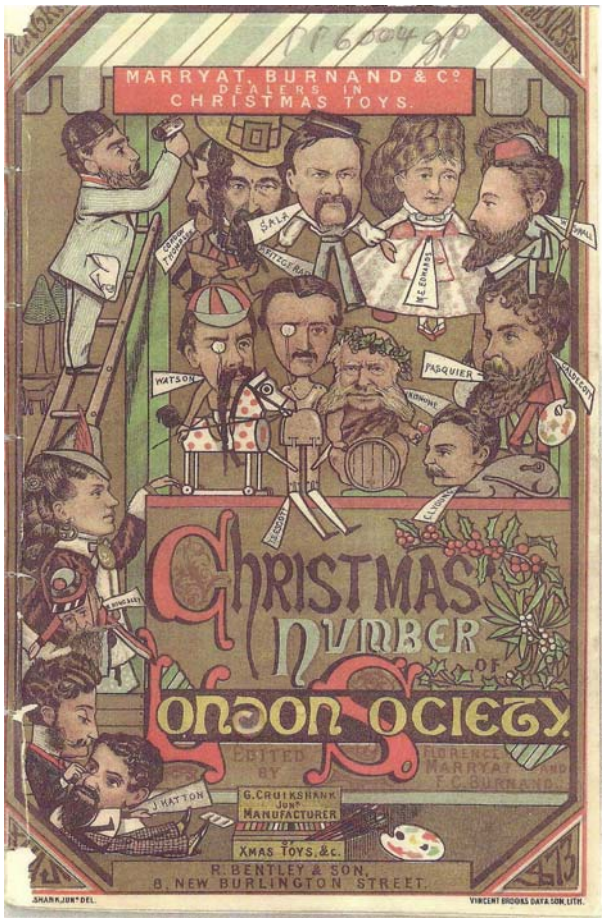


**Figure 3.d. George Cruikshank Jnr., [Opening Illustration], *London Society*, vol. 22 (Christmas Number 1872).**

working on dolls which represent each contributor. F. C. Burnand (a contributor who sometimes co-edited the special numbers with Marryat) stands on a ladder at the top of the page, hanging the contributors up for sale. Gazing commandingly out over her shop window, Marryat appears to instruct Burnand on where best to place her contributors. She is figured as in control here: Marryat has Burnand and her illustrator near at hand, both doing her bidding.

Like the images of Yonge as Mother Goose, this illustration makes a clear statement about Marryat as editor: the entire business of *London Society* seems to depend upon her leadership and instruction, and indeed Marryat had been working hard for this Christmas number. In June 1872 she had written to Wilkie Collins, requesting a short story for this Christmas number. Collins, however, declined Marryat's offer, explaining that a bad bout of 'Rheumatic Gout' and prior commitments to other magazines meant that he was forced to 'refrain from accepting any proposals for Christmas work'.[43] Though he wrote to Marryat that he did 'not abandon the hope of being able to contribute to "London Society"', he in fact never offered a contribution.[44] Marryat had more luck with Charles Reade, whose *A Simpleton: A Story of the Day* (1873) was the first novel that Marryat serialised in *London Society* between August 1872 and September 1873 (Reade calling Marryat his 'new and zealous Editor'[45]). As well as emphasising Marryat's commanding role, this Christmas illustration for 1872 also made a statement about the guiding principles of the magazine under the new editor. With a packed shop window, full of colourful characters, quality illustrators, the latest novelists and metropolitan journalists to tempt the reader, Marryat's *London Society* was clearly all about commerce, fashion and entertainment. It is significant that her empowerment is figured slightly differently from Yonge's, because she is shown to be stepping out of the home and into the marketplace in a very public way, standing outside her shop window, which seems to anticipate the professional confidence of the New Woman of the 1880s and 1890s who figured herself outside the home.

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[43] Letter from Wilkie Collins to Florence Marryat (15 June 1872), Marryat Family Papers, MSS. 104 (GENM), Beinecke Library, Yale University. Uncat.
[44] Wilkie Collins to Florence Marryat (15 June 1872).
[45] Letter from Charles Reade to Florence Marryat (4 January 1873), Marryat Family Papers, MSS. 104 (GENM), Beinecke Library, Yale University. Uncat.

I will return to the characterisation of Marryat through illustrations later in the chapter, but I now want to turn my attention briefly to the accompanying literature in the magazine itself, because this helped to define Marryat's persona as a spiritualist editress. In March 1874, Marryat began the serialisation of her second novel in *London Society*. *Open! Sesame!* (March 1874–June 1875) capitalised on the vogue for spiritualism that was gripping London during the 1870s. In *The Darkened Room,* Alex Owen describes this period as 'the golden age of English spiritualism', and indeed the 1860s and 1870s saw a continual debate surrounding, and enquiry into, all things supernatural.[46] After the famous Fox sisters began the vogue for spiritualism in the 1850s, mediumship crossed the Atlantic and transformed from table rapping and tipping to the purported 'full-form materialisation' of spirits in the early 1870s.[47] A subsequent surge in scientific investigations resulted, the most famous of which was a series of trial séances conducted by William Crookes.[48] Crookes, and other investigators like him, set out to test the integrity of the high-profile spirit mediums who were claiming to have achieved these full-form materialisations, most notably Florence Cook and Mary Rosina Showers. These two young women became famous in spiritualist circles during the early 1870s as the 'two princesses of the spiritualist world', and both were subject to investigation for fraudulent practice.[49]

Marryat's interest in spiritualism began around the same time as these investigations and she clearly saw a link between herself and these young mediums. In *There is No Death* (1892), Marryat claimed that before spiritualism arose as a

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[46] Owen, *The Darkened Room*, p.1.
[47] I am using Marlene Tromp's term here to describe the 'physical embodiment of a spirit manifested through the spiritual energy' of the trance medium. See Marlene Tromp, 'Spirited Sexuality: Sex, Marriage, and Victorian Spiritualism', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 31 (2003), p.68.
[48] For a detailed summary of William Crookes's career and trial séances, see Janet Oppenheim, *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.338-354.
[49] Owen, *The Darkened Room*, p.51.

fashion of 'modern times' she was 'accustomed to see, and to be very much alarmed at seeing, certain forms that appeared to [her] at night' (*There is No Death,* p.13).[50] Always ready to emphasise any link with her father, Marryat claimed that she in fact inherited her affinity with the spirit world from Frederick Marryat who 'was not only a believer in ghosts, but himself a ghost-seer' (*There is No Death,* p.9). However, Marryat fashioned herself not only as a believer in spiritualism but also as a type of amateur medium, later describing that '[o]ften I entreated [the spirit] to speak, but when a low, hissing sound came close to my ear, I would scream with terror and rush from my room' (*There is No Death,* p.64). Marryat's involvement in fashionable séances in London intensified during the early 1870s so that the editor quickly became 'well known in spiritualist circles and acquainted with all the best mediums'.[51]

The novel that she was serialising at this time, *Open! Sesame!,* was the product of Marryat's spiritualist investigation and combined her interests in spiritualism with her sensationalism. The story follows the fate of the 'very impulsive and very strong willed' heroine Everil Norman-West.[52] Despite being in love with another man, Everil is forced, due to a clause in her father's will, to marry her reclusive and mysterious first cousin, Valance, whom she describes as an 'invalid – a bookworm – a lunatic!' (*Open!*, p.33) The reason for Everil's disgust with her cousin is revealed to the reader in stages through Valance's diary as he charts his growing obsession with investigating the spiritual phenomena that he increasingly encounters.

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[50] Alex Owen describes Marryat as an 'ardent' believer (Owen, *The Darkened Room,* p.227). Yet it is interesting to note that when she wrote to George Eliot in 1879 to offer her condolences on the death of Lewes (who died in November 1878), Marryat did not write about the comfort she had found in spiritualism, but simply wrote to tell Eliot that she felt 'very deeply for [her] in [her] late bereavement.' I can find no evidence of a response from Eliot to Marryat's letter. Letter from Florence Marryat Lean to George Eliot (8 February 1879), George Eliot and George Henry Lewes Collection, General Collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

[51] Owen, *The Darkened Room,* p.254, n24.

[52] Florence Marryat, *Open! Sesame!* (Chicago: Donnelley, Lloyd & Co, 1876), p.19. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

He practises spirit writing, through which he contacts his dead father, he believes he has the power to mesmerise and that he is a spirit medium, indulging in nightly séances with a 'spirit control' called 'Isola'.[53] Valance's desire to investigate and explain his experiences leads him to adopt an unhealthily isolated lifestyle; narrative tension is heightened as Everil is not aware of what exactly Valance is researching (though the reader is) until late in the novel when, in a deliberately anti-climactic scene, Valance's 'spirit control' is revealed to be none other than his plotting sister-in-law, Agatha, hiding 'beneath a golden wig and cloudy draperies' in the hope that her deception could drive Valance into an early grave, leaving his wealth for her son (*Open!*, p.360). As Beth Palmer notes, Agatha's success depends upon the quality of her performance, and as such, the narrative figures female identity as 'specious and constructed'.[54] For Palmer, this novel refuses to 'allow the spiritual and the fake, or the performed and the authentic to relax into simple opposition', despite the conclusion of Agatha being caught, the married couple being happily reconciled and Valance promising to renounce his investigations.[55]

I have discussed the plot of *Open! Sesame!* in detail elsewhere; here I want to focus upon what it can tell us about Marryat's emerging professional identity as a spiritualist and editor.[56] Published alongside Marryat's serial were a series of articles, written from opposing sides of the spiritualist debate, creating a discourse within the magazine which vigorously debated the finer details of the practice of the spirit medium. In February 1874, the first of Henry M. Dunphy's two-part series supporting spiritualism appeared. 'Modern Mysteries' considered and defended the cases of Florence Cook and Mary Rosina Showers, focusing largely on the former. This fact is

[53] A 'spirit control' is a spirit that the medium used to call forth others from the spirit world.
[54] Palmer, 'Florence Marryat, Theatricality and Performativity', p.1.
[55] Palmer, 'Florence Marryat, Theatricality and Performativity', p.13.
[56] See Georgina O'Brien Hill, '"Above the breath of suspicion": Florence Marryat and the Shadow of the Fraudulent Trance Medium', *Women's Writing*, vol. 15, no. 3 (2008), pp.333-347.

of significance as Dunphy, one of Cook's 'wealthier patrons', provided Marryat with her first introduction to the fashionable young medium.[57] Dunphy introduced and defended Cook in his first article, justifying his choice by stating:

> I have preferred to dwell upon the manifestations witnessed with the mediumship of Miss Cook, for two reasons. First, because they were invariably conducted under strict test conditions, and in the presence of persons of high intelligence and character, well known for the interest they take in the phenomena; and, secondly, because the apparitions, being visible under the most powerful light, and solid to the touch, must be regarded as developments of an order higher than any previously witnessed at this side of the Atlantic.[58]

In commissioning this article supporting Cook, Marryat was tapping into the flourishing interest in the medium which was spreading beyond the spiritualist community into the wider periodical press. As Marlene Tromp has noted, 'from Kensington Palace to the penny press, debates about Spiritualism appeared everywhere'.[59] Furthermore, her own pro-spiritualist novel, due to begin serialisation the following month, would be supported within the periodical by Dunphy's non-fictional accounts which championed the now famous spirit medium. With this level of interest evident in the magazine, *London Society*'s house style quickly came to be defined by the interests of the spiritualist editor. Marryat, however, annotated Dunphy's first article with the following editorial note: 'The Editor is not bound by the opinions of this article, but considers that in an age of progress the public should be afforded an opportunity of judging a question from all points of view.'[60] This passage suggests that Marryat was eager to appear editorially objective, but her conclusion implies that she felt the anti-spiritualist journalism in the wider periodical press needed to be rebalanced and she positioned *London Society* as the magazine in which this would happen. As when Marryat edited her father's letters for his

[57] Tromp, 'Spirited Sexuality: Sex, Marriage, and Victorian Spiritualism', p.74.
[58] Henry M. Dunphy, 'Modern Mysteries: Part 1', *London Society*, vol. 25 (February 1874), p.166.
[59] Tromp, 'Spirited Sexuality: Sex, Marriage, and Victorian Spiritualism', p.70.
[60] [Florence Marryat], *London Society*, vol. 25 (February 1874), p.166.

biography, her comments here drew attention to her position as editor, as well as her belief in spiritualism. In other words, this editorial intrusion to Dunphy's article not only reminded readers of her presence and of her belief, but it also highlighted the female professional and her public role.

This was not the only time that Marryat included an editorial footnote during the spiritualist debate. In June 1874, 'Free Lance' (the anonymous author of *London Society*'s gossip column 'Social Subjects') dedicated some space to 'Modern Spiritualism', but began by admitting: 'I have never been present at a *séance*'. To this comment, Marryat added the following:

> It would be better if FREE LANCE *did* attend a few *séances* before resuming this subject. Scepticism that rejects inquiry becomes bigotry, and we must have a good reason for forming our opinions before we can expect the public to adopt them – ED. 'LONDON SOCIETY'.[61]

Marryat's interruption to this article highlighted the contributor's weakness in commenting on a subject of which he had no practical knowledge.[62] Furthermore, her note also highlighted the experience of her other main contributor at that time (Dunphy) and his implied impartiality. Indeed, it can be suggested that Dunphy's series was published alongside her own pro-spiritualist fiction in order to achieve that aim. Dunphy's defence of Cook in *London Society* formed an important part of the debate surrounding the trance medium as it was printed just two months after the trial séance while the controversy was still raging in the periodical press.

Indeed, fraudulent mediumship is at the heart of *Open! Sesame!*, although 'Isola' is not revealed to be Agatha until the final instalment. Agatha's deception is

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[61] [Florence Marryat], *London Society*, vol. 25 (June 1874), p.549.

[62] I have been unable to identify the author of this column. Before Marryat took over as editor, the author of *London Society*'s gossip column, which was also known as 'The Talk of the Town', 'Social Subjects' and 'The Piccadilly Papers', was Frederick Arnold, and therefore Arnold may have been the author here.

carefully presented as so impressive and convincing that even Everil, the sceptical heroine, is greatly affected by an accidental encounter with 'Isola':

> Everil presently perceives the faint glimmer of a light. It flickers first against the stained glass of the window opposite to them; then passes to a second one at the farthest end of the room […] widening in degree, with every moment, until it reveals a mass of white – a face – a woman's bust and shoulders – diaphanous drapery – and a veil of flowing golden hair! […] [Everil] is not so brave as [Valance] imagined. She has fainted (*Open!*, pp.242-243).

With spiritualism prominent in the lead serial and accompanying articles, illustrations of Marryat at this time served to reinforce her identity as a spiritualist and editor. The Holiday Number for July 1874 was called *Sea-side Secrets, or, A Holiday Dream of London Society*. As I mentioned earlier in Chapter One, the use of dreams allowed a supernatural element in even the most realistic of fiction and *Sea-side Secrets* fully exploits this potential. This issue is written as a framed-tale narrative in which the narrator adopts the role of guide between each of the stories, contributed by Marryat's most popular authors.[63] His introduction begins as he reads a letter from Marryat calling all contributors to her home to discuss their ideas for the Holiday Number:

> One morning I received the following letter, written on pink paper, fringed with gold, incolsed [*sic*] in a pinker envelope, whereon were beautifully engraved heraldic devices of dazzling brightness, exquisitely designed:-
> 'MY MOST VAULED FRIEND […] I summon you, on your allegiance, to assist me in my Holiday Number of "London Society." It has been proposed that we should all go out of town. Will you kindly call here and meet my staff officers?
> Yours, 'F. M'.
> My answer: -
> 'The wishes of F. M. the Editress of "L.S.," are commands to me'.[64]

The hyperbole of the description of Marryat and her letter in this passage serves to signal her difference as a woman editing within a male-dominated profession. Marryat is further 'othered' by numerous links to the exotic: her writing material is 'pink' and 'pinker', 'exquisitely designed' and tipped with gold so that it dazzles the narrator

[63] For more on Dickens's use of this technique in his magazines, see Ruth F. Glancy, 'Dickens and Christmas: His Framed-Tale Themes', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, vol. 35, no. 1 (June 1980), pp.53-72.
[64] [Anonymous], 'Sea-side Secrets', *London Society*, vol. 25 (Holiday Number 1874), p.1.

with brightness and beauty. As in the tongue-in-cheek illustrations of Charlotte Yonge controlling her contributors through violence and force (see figure 2.c), femininity here is powerful: the narrator finds himself physically summoned so that the editor's 'wishes' become 'commands'.

Importantly, Marryat is not shown in a public office. She is not like Mr Braggett in 'Charlotte Cray', who sees his contributors in his office in the Strand; rather, she conducts her editorial work at home:

> Artificial heaters, concealed from view, rendered the atmosphere perfect for even the most bronchitical of our party, and fragrant pastiles diffused their odours so delicately as to delight without overpowering the senses.
>
> Black boys in turbans, with teeth of gleaming whiteness, and eyes beaming with an intelligence far above anything to be found in the ordinary types of the Nubian slave, handed delicious coffee and scented chilbouques.
>
> Lounging on divans, sitting on sofas, standing and talking, there before me I saw all the contributors whom the magic wand of the Editress had summoned about her.[65]

In this passage, the feminine and the exotic are 'othered' and both become a spectacle that the reader is invited to consume. Reina Lewis has pointed out that the 'detailed luxury' of Orientalism was 'an important part of the discursive construction of the Orient as other', and indeed the reader is submerged here in references to the East, all of which rely upon the intoxification of senses.[66] The room is heated but not overwhelming, there is an exotic smell in the air which both delights the senses and soothes the lungs, there are 'black boys in turbans', serving coffee to the women and cigars to the men. The descriptions are deliberately sumptuous and elaborate.

Rather than conducting her business in a formal place of work, Marryat is here represented as making good use of the domestic sphere for business purposes. Marryat's *salon* is a space which is at once welcoming, exotic and sensuous, a place of work that is full of luxury, in which the contributors are seduced by their

[65] [Anonymous], 'Sea-side Secrets', p.2.
[66] Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representations* (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), p.113.

surroundings, invited to ‘lounge’, relax on sofas, to mix, network with colleagues and chat informally. At the centre of this heady atmosphere is the ‘editress’, whose ‘magic wand’, like Charlotte Yonge’s witch’s broom, is a symbol of the power that has called all the contributors to her side. So, the power of Marryat’s position was being explicitly associated with spiritualism through this reference to her ‘magic wand’, while also being simultaneously framed within an Orientalist discourse. However, unlike Yonge, whose domestic work space was firmly centred on the family, Marryat’s reflected her spiritualism rather than her role in the family. Marryat did not, however, renounce the identity of a ‘dutiful daughter’, for her father’s name was useful to her as editor (as in the advertisement, figure 1.i), so that her editorial persona added to, rather than replaced, this identity.

By means of the dream device, the reader is taken on an adventure through the various contributors’ stories. Though it is the narrator’s narrative that links each of these stories, the narrator himself is in fact transported from one to another by Marryat’s ‘psychic force’; thus the editor acts as captain at the helm of this adventure, echoing her father’s persona. Throughout the narrator’s introduction, Marryat’s femininity and power in her editorial role are gently mocked and continually highlighted. She is an ‘Editress’, a ‘Chieftainess’, a ‘Superior Force’, a ‘mysterious being’ and ‘Undine’ the water nymph. She takes on the characteristics of a witch-figure as she casts a ‘spell’ over the narrator which compels him to pack his bags and listen to the different stories. This blending of spiritualism and Orientalism continues as the narrator is spirited away to Brighton aquarium (Brighton being Marryat’s birthplace), where the editor is waiting for him to begin her story. His introduction of her is worth citing at length:

> [i]n the coral caves, among the sea-horses, evidence of Darwinic theories, crawfish, live lobsters, eels, and noisy porpoises, I fell into – a tank? – no, a reverie.
>
> I was in the primeval forest. I was among the tarns: I was swimming down a canal to the sea. Whales met me; mammoths girded me; leviathans opened their eyes and winked slowly. […]
>
> A silvery laugh rippled away on the waves of sound, and rolled on, up stream, skywards.
>
> 'You know me now', said the voice.
>
> The influence was on me once more.
>
> Magnetic Psychic Force.
>
> I felt myself gradually lifted up and wafted towards the entrance. […] My Editress (for it was she) had seated herself near the codfish, and was finishing some manuscript, which, intuitively, I felt was about Brighton.
>
> My gaze was arrested, and an electric current brought me to her side.
>
> 'Hush!' she said, 'we are invisible, and inaudible, to all save ourselves'. […] in a clear, ringing voice, which, strangely enough disturbed nobody in the Aquarium [ …] my Editress commenced her recital.[67]

In this passage, Marryat transports her narrator, and the reader, into another world, the dreamscape of the narrator's 'reverie'. Echoing the seafaring mode of her father's novels, Marryat's contribution is distinguished by an adventure into water, but rather than the wide open seas of her father's seascapes, her world is a mysterious one of enclosed depths of deep lakes and coral caves, housing the mythical and strange: the sea monster, the leviathan, and the mammoth. Indeed, she seems to personify the mysterious waters that surround her: her 'silvery' voice being like 'music on the moonlit water'. Furthermore, the term 'Magnetic Psychic Force', the force which Marryat uses to transport her narrator around Brighton aquarium, deliberately evokes her reputation as a spiritualist. Just as the illustrations in *The Barnacle* served to crystallize Charlotte Yonge's editorial persona as Mother Goose, so too the illustrations for this number cemented Marryat's persona as a spiritualist editress.

In her discussion of representations of dreamscapes, Nicola Bown notes how uncommon Victorian depictions of dream images actually were, but that where they appear, the image of the sleeper with his dreams surrounding him as if physical beings

[67] [Anonymous], 'Sea-side Secrets', p.32.

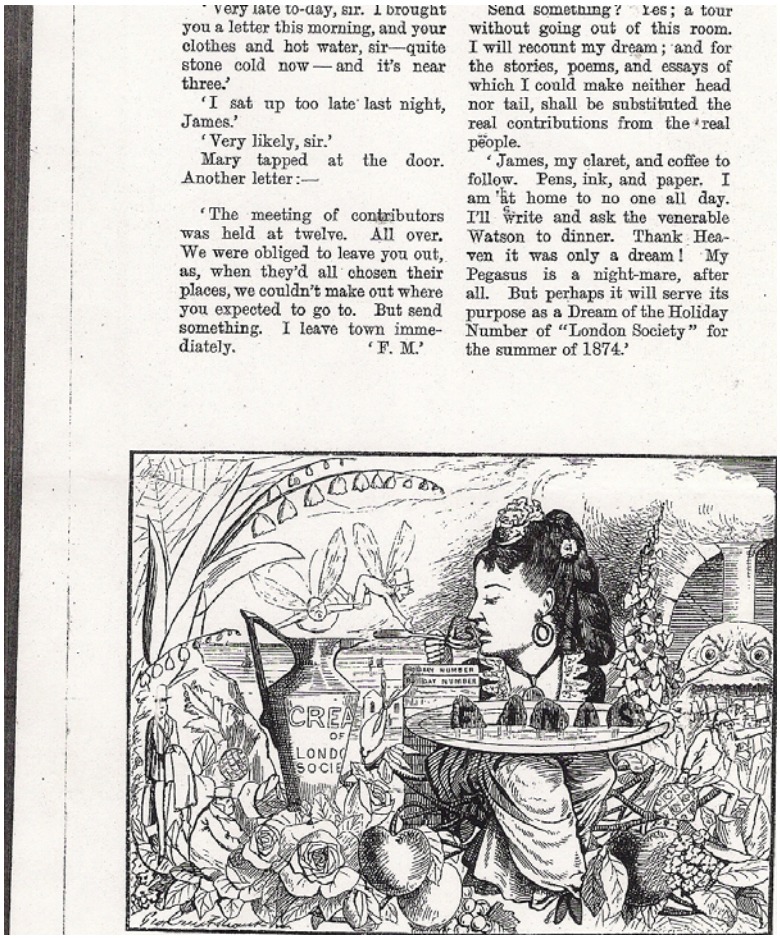
were most common, as in Robert William Buss's *Dickens's Dream* (1870).[68] Bown notes that dream images, which are 'in reality, inside the dreamer's own mind, appear to be outside it; spectral illusions seem to have the same material reality as the physical causes which produced them'.[69] Although this blurring of the boundaries between the real and imagined worlds worried some, it was seen more positively by spiritualists who believed that


**Figure 3.e. George Cruikshanks Jnr., 'All About it', *London Society,* vol. 26 (Holiday Number 1874).**

dreams could engender contact with the spirit world.

[68] Nicola Bown, 'What is the stuff that dreams are made of?' in Nicola Bown, Carolyn Burdett, & Thurschwell, Pamela (eds), *The Victorian Supernatural* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.151.
[69] Bown, 'What is the stuff that dreams are made of?', p.162.

The frontispiece illustration for *Sea-side Secrets* (figure 3.e) is interesting in the light of Bown's comments. In this image the narrator sleeps, his eyes screwed tightly shut, with an incredibly active dream-world surrounding him in which images from all the stories of that number appear. As before, Cruikshank appears to be busily painting the scene,


very late to-day, sir. I brought you a letter this morning, and your clothes and hot water, sir—quite stone cold now—and it's near three.'

'I sat up too late last night, James.'

'Very likely, sir.'

Mary tapped at the door. Another letter:—

'The meeting of contributors was held at twelve. All over. We were obliged to leave you out, as, when they'd all chosen their places, we couldn't make out where you expected to go to. But send something. I leave town immediately. 'F. M.'

Send something? Yes; a tour without going out of this room. I will recount my dream; and for the stories, poems, and essays of which I could make neither head nor tail, shall be substituted the real contributions from the real people.

'James, my claret, and coffee to follow. Pens, ink, and paper. I am at home to no one all day. I'll write and ask the venerable Watson to dinner. Thank Heaven it was only a dream! My Pegasus is a night-mare, after all. But perhaps it will serve its purpose as a Dream of the Holiday Number of "London Society" for the summer of 1874.'

**Figure 3.f. George Cruikshank Jnr., [Closing illustration], *London Society*, vol. 26 (Holiday Number 1874).**

whilst Marryat holds centre stage as the spiritualist editress who conducts the whole affair. Realism and the surreal are blended as Marryat conducts the every day business of reviewing a manuscript with one hand whilst casually embracing one of Brighton aquarium's inhabitants with another (the massive codfish she holds under her arm). Though the dreamy mists that surround her mean that we can only just make her out, she is nevertheless at the centre of the image, as Charlotte Yonge so often was. All elements of this crowded and busy image are pointing toward or facing her, reflecting the command that she has over this particular scene, and the magazine as a whole.

Marryat's presence as a showcase editor continued to be maintained as in the magazine she serialised two more novels until she gave up the post in 1875. But this increasing presence as a novelist meant that her editorial image began to fade from the illustrations. She appeared for one last time in the concluding illustration for *Sea-side Secrets* (figure 3.f).

As Palmer notes, the resemblance to John Tenniel's illustration of the Queen of Hearts in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) is striking, for Marryat is figured as a fairy tale character, like Charlotte Yonge as Mother Goose, rather than as a professional author-editor.[70] In this image, Marryat is shown once again in her distinctive rich dress, with her hair elaborately styled. Again, she is at the centre of the image, but there are no recognisable contributors or characters around her; instead the editor is surrounded by anonymous men. Much larger than any of these inconsequential figures, Marryat takes centre stage, clearly relishing her success, as a male fairy spoons 'the cream of London Society' into her waiting and open mouth. Here, the woman editor is depicted as profiting from the success of her periodical: she is clearly enjoying devouring the fruits (or cream) of her labours. Like Eliot and Yonge, Marryat adapted her persona depending upon the current demands of her career. As a novelist trying to break into the literary market, Marryat styled herself as a novice in her early career, finding posing as an amateur a useful tactic. As she gained celebrity and professional confidence, Marryat adapted this persona into that of the spiritualist editress, suiting her work and interests but also providing her with an identity that would serve her for the rest of her career. In this last illustration, she is figured as a successful woman who openly and unapologetically enjoyed the fruits of

[70] Palmer, 'Strategies of Sensation and the Transformation of the Press', p.224.

her hard work, revelling in the pleasure of work in a way that many of the woman artist-professionals in her later fiction would do.

**The Woman Artist-Professional in Florence Marryat's Fiction**

Throughout her career, George Eliot attempted to describe an ideal of professionalism which emphasised women's special capacity for moral authority whilst acknowledging that some women could employ that 'precious speciality' for financial gain ('Silly Novels', p.162). For Eliot, women would not lose their femininity, as long as their financial gain was couched in terms of a spiritual product. Though she did depict ambition as ruining the lives of some women, she did not shy away from occasionally presenting work as potentially refining. Charlotte Yonge, on the other hand, placed greater emphasis on the importance of posing as an amateur than even Eliot did, drawing attention away from women's engagement with the marketplace. For Yonge, the professional woman must always reference domestic ideology in order to justify her success, no matter at what stage of her career, so that her working heroines behave as though they were amateurs. Marryat shared with Eliot and Yonge the value of refinement through artistic performance, but represented adopting amateurism as a useful tactic for women professionals only at the beginning of their careers (thus reflecting her own career trajectory). Furthermore, the woman professional working at home is very visible in Marryat's novels; she neither flinched from showing her heroines as reliant on the pay they received for their work, nor enjoying their success, in contrast to Eliot and Yonge.

Before I discuss Marryat's representation of literary women, I want to pause to consider the figure of the actress, who often served as a representation of all working women because she was very obviously on display in a public space. Sarah Bilston identifies Marryat's *My Sister the Actress* as one of the many theatrical novels of the

1870s and 1880s in which the stage is presented as a 'noble and ennobling profession'.[71] As noted earlier in this chapter, the epigraph for this novel emphasises the honour inherent in playing a part 'well'; appropriately, therefore, *My Sister the Actress* opens with the sixteen year old heroine, Bertha Durant, on stage, taking part in a reciting competition at her school. Although she does perform well, Bertha is, like Mirah Lapidoth in *Daniel Deronda*, 'disturbed' by the applause she receives. Bertha's vanity is not roused by the praise she receives for her performance, and as the noise of clapping 'bursts' into her consciousness, she 'starts as though suddenly awaking from a dream', and 'runs off the platform' (*My Sister*, p.2). All that concerns Bertha, at this early stage in her career, is that she has played her part well, not that she receives praise for her performance.

Bertha, like all the female artist-professionals discussed so far, is forced by circumstance to earn a living. Like Mirah, she is very clear that her motivations for working are economic ones. She considers teaching, 'bar work', and cleaning, with performance being her last resort. This catalogue of possible careers shows a determination to break down the boundaries of middle-class sensibility by considering traditionally working class roles (cleaner and barmaid), as well as more acceptable roles for her class (teaching). Like Gwendolen Harleth, Bertha's first experience of performance is through private theatricals, a *tableau vivant*, in an appropriate middle-class pastime. Despite this private setting a platform is erected and lit up by footlights, so that Bertha's stage very closely resembles one in the theatre. In deep mourning just three months after the death of her mother, Bertha does not appear on stage, but instead has managed the event: she therefore 'takes no prominent part in the display' and 'shares in none of the applause' (*My Sister*, p.73). Yet Bertha is on display, for

[71] Bilston, 'Authentic Performance', p.39.

she catches the eye of an agent who asks her to recite in front of the audience. From the opening chapter, the reader knows that Bertha is an excellent performer, but her audience prepare themselves to endure 'a schoolgirl's recitation of some hackneyed speech from Shakespeare'. They are, therefore, stunned by the 'rich' and 'exquisite' voice with which Bertha recites from Tennyson's 'Idylls of the King' (*My Sister*, p.75).

Like Mirah's singing of her mother's Hebrew hymns, Bertha's performance becomes a spiritual exchange with her audience, and as a consequence both performer and audience benefit. Indeed, Bertha's recital makes such a connection with her audience that it has the power to make 'the listless men and the flirting women become interested and serious', bringing tears to their eyes (*My Sister*, p.75). The frivolous become (temporarily) responsive to culture, interested and serious: this is refining work for both Bertha and her audience. Marryat's depiction of artistic performance, unlike Eliot's, is infused with the suggestion of mediumship, as Bertha seems to become possessed by the characters she conjures up, just as Marryat described becoming possessed by her characters in the act of writing:

> Bertha neither sees nor hears the effect she is producing. She is far away; she has left the drawing-room […] and gone back into the Past she tells of. She mourns with Arthur – the sob that nearly chokes his utterance has its ghostly copy in her own – she looks through her unshed tears upon the golden tresses with which Guinevere "made her face a darkness from the King", and she rides away with him in the mist, bereft and alone! (*My Sister*, p.75)

Still distraught from the sudden death of her mother, Bertha is able to inject genuine feeling into her performance, and as such she becomes a medium for spiritual exchange between herself and her audience: she does not *imitate* Arthur's grief, for she presents it as her own: her cry becomes a 'ghostly copy' of King Arthur's. Feeling is the element that Eliot believed the woman artist could infuse with masculine

training, and this is what Bertha's performance also suggests. As Zakreski points out in her summary of George Henry Lewes's discussion of Hamlet:

> an actor must not react as just anyone would upon seeing a ghost, but as Hamlet would. Such a style of acting called upon performers to abandon standardised emotional representation that was recognizably "theatrical" and advertised skilled acting performances as "natural."[72]

Bertha, like Mirah, is a 'natural' actress. However, the trope of mediumship returns as Bertha seems to be released from possession by her character:

> As she comes back to herself and receives the thanks of her audience, and over-hears their compliments upon her talent, the bright lights dazzle her, she feels sick and giddy – the grief of Arthur appears to have renewed her own trouble, and she is only anxious to get away to her own room and be quiet.(*My Sister*, pp.75-76).

Possession by her character seems to distance Bertha from the reality of her performance, which she is still uncomfortable with. Like Eliot, Marryat did not shun the concept of performance altogether, just poor performance, and the trope of mediumship allows Marryat to suggest that Bertha perfectly represents the characters that she portrays for it seems she becomes possessed by them.

What saves Bertha from Gwendolen's fate of failing because of egoism is that, like Mirah, she strives for excellence, she works 'steadily […] never shirking trouble in order to perfect' (*My Sister*, p.103), and she puts in the kind of 'severe effort' that Eliot valued (*GEL*: IV: 300). Despite being eager for a career, as Gwendolen is, Bertha is shown to be aware of her ego as a potential obstacle for a successful career: 'I hope my sudden elevation won't make me giddy. So many stop half-way to fame because of self-esteem!' (*My Sister*, p.182). Because Bertha is aware of this potential trap, and because she works hard at perfecting her art, she is able to avoid Gwendolen's fate of marrying for money. When she considers the possibility of marriage, she feels determined that 'she will not be called upon to give him kisses on demand, or to sit close to him on the sofa and pretend to like it' (*My Sister*, p.184). As

[72] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p.150.

we saw in Charlotte Yonge's novels, work offers a way of temporarily avoiding marriage, and Bertha asserts that '[a]rt claims her, and she will be wedded to no one else' (*My Sister,* p.208).

As understudy to the 'great "star"', Miss Caroline Cuthbert, Bertha slowly learns her trade. Despite being so egotistical that she is 'odious to herself and others', Cuthbert is an actress worthy of praise for she affects her audience emotionally. Watching her performance of 'Juliet', Bertha feels that 'she has never seen any acting that affected her so much' (*My Sister,* p.166). Rather than react with envy, as her peers do, this makes Bertha determined to learn:

> She follows her every movement like a cat watching a mouse; drinks in the modulation of each sentence that falls from her lips, and takes note of the slightest change in the expression of her face. And this, not for one night, but many (*My Sister,* p.166).

An important part of Bertha's training is playing different roles, 'sometimes a chambermaid, an old woman and a duchess' (*My Sister,* p.115). Again, Marryat's fiction highlights female identity as 'specious and constructed'.[73]Although she finds this experience 'distasteful to her feelings', Bertha understands that 'she must try every style of art, until she has settled down in her proper position' (*My Sister,* p.115). Despite this, she is ambitious to place herself in the realm of high art, to 'soar into the highest regions of dramatic art' and separate herself from the 'stagey' players whose dubious morality seems to be signalled by wearing as much rouge by day as by night (*My Sister,* p.176). But Bertha is clearly separated from her fellow actresses not only by her talent but also by her class. She tells another actress 'I *am* a lady!', and later reassures her family: 'I am an actress, but I am not common' (*My Sister*, p.155). Her manager, acknowledging that the other women are 'wild', reminds Bertha that

[73] Palmer, 'Florence Marryat, Theatricality and Performativity', p.1.

'[t]hey've not your advantages, remember; and if they talk roughly, they've warm hearts at the bottom' (*My Sister,* p.102).[74]

Part of Bertha's negotiation of her professional identity while training involves taking a stage name, using her mother's maiden name of 'Selwyn'. The novel highlights the importance of self-naming for professional women through Bertha's forty year old widowed flatmate who goes by the stage name of 'Miss Kate Montalambert'. However, she also refers to herself by her 'real' name of 'Mrs Henry Potter'. The result is that Bertha 'hardly knows which to call her' (*My Sister,* p.111). The narrator also switches between 'Kate' and 'Mrs Potter', continually reminding the reader of the two roles that this woman plays: widow and worker. This suggests that the characters of 'Kate the actress' and 'Mrs Potter the widow' sit easily together, existing in tandem so that this woman can comfortably switch between roles at will, or even perform both simultaneously. This is a reconciliation that the heroines of Eliot and Yonge are often not able to achieve, and indeed, it is not common even in Marryat's work. This may be because Kate/Mrs Potter is single: although she retains the identity of a married woman, she is widowed, and therefore no longer experiences the responsibilities of wifehood that Isabel, for example, in Yonge's *Dynevor Terrace*, feels. In other words, because Kate/Mrs Potter is single, her days of having to compromise between her job and family are behind her.

Unlike Eliot's Armgart and Leonora, Bertha's ambition is presented as healthy, not something that eventually corrupts and destroys her. After her first performance on stage, Bertha is described as 'intoxicated' by the experience, finding the applause to be 'like the first drop of blood to the tiger' (*My Sister,* p.86). As she becomes more successful, each new role makes her 'pant for distinction and applause'

[74] 'Wild woman' being the term coined by Eliza Lynn Linton in her 'Wild Women' articles published in *Nineteenth Century* magazine in 1891.

(*My Sister,* p.332). On being offered the part of 'Juliet', for example, Bertha's reaction is physical and sensual: her 'eyes dilate: her lips part; her colour comes and goes' (*My Sister,* p.170). Here, Bertha's ambition is openly and unapologetically eroticised. As Sarah Bilston notes, this is common in women's theatrical fiction, where the actress is firstly motivated by money and secondly by 'passionate commitment to and inherent love of the profession'.[75] Unlike Eliot and Yonge, Marryat was unapologetic about the pleasure women gain from work. Indeed, once a woman is established in her career, she no longer needs to pose as an amateur and can relish her success, just as we saw Marryat relishing her success in the illustration of her devouring the cream of London society.

Because of this, Bertha's fame increases, and she engages with the type of display that Mirah and Ermine shun. Journals 'teem' with her name and critics write of her as a 'true artist' (*My Sister,* p.280). We might recall that Daniel stopped Hans painting Mirah's portrait, a painting which is nevertheless unique and relatively private, but Bertha, on returning to England after a hugely successful tour of America, not only allows mass-produced copies of her image, but also allows it to be displayed in shop windows and sold:

> As the years pass on, and her popularity becomes more established and her charms more developed, beautiful photographs of her, taken in every conceivable character and position, issue from the world-famed studio of Mora, and find their way into the windows of the Regent Street photographers. At one time the whole front of a certain establishment is monopolised by her portraits, whilst a large placard with the name of Bertha Selwyn draws a continuous crowd to gaze upon her attractive face and figure (*My Sister*, p.262).

Rather than being corrupted by this experience, falling into the trap of vanity like Rachel in Yonge's *The Clever Woman of the Family* or Gwendolen and Leonora in Eliot's *Daniel Deronda,* Bertha's ambition refines her character, even though her

[75] Bilston, 'Authentic Performance', p.43.

body is very obviously on display in this passage, the posters inviting the public 'to gaze upon her attractive face and figure'.

Bertha's ambition is not just refining to her character, but also those around her. The Frere family, into which Bertha eventually marries, is represented as dangerously inbred and generally unfit for survival (as is often the case in Marryat's portrayal of the aristocracy): grandmother, father and son have a 'ludicrous resemblance' to each other (*My Sister,* p.132). They represent the absurd, the old fashioned, and the obsolete past, disapproving of ice-skating because it invites a 'love of display' (*My Sister,* p.143). Bertha represents the healthful vigour that the Frere family bloodline requires. When she first meets her fiancé, Robert, he feels only a vague desire to do something useful, but he has no ambition or talent. She, however, unapologetically tells him 'I yearn to be famous', and her passion and ambition prove to be infectious (*My Sister,* p.151), for when she breaks off their engagement to pursue her career in America, her independent spirit inspires Robert to work: 'I determined that I would set to work like other men, and make an independence for myself' (*My Sister,* p.271). Only when Robert becomes an ambitious man does Bertha deem him suitable for marriage.

Yet Marryat seems to have been unable to sustain fully a narrative which champions female ambition, for as Bertha grows in celebrity she begins to feel that 'public praise has no power to fill up a woman's heart. She wants home-love and duties, and sympathy, and all the rest is worth nothing without them!' (*My Sister,* p.319). Bertha does not learn to perform as Kate/Mrs Potter does, for the novel ends when Robert proposes to her for a second time, and thus the difficulty of how she would perform as both wife and worker is simply avoided. Ultimately, like Eliot,

Marryat's heroines often relinquish their profession once they are married, or no mention is made of how their work fits into their new role of wife.

Whilst *My Sister the Actress* specifically explores the 'noble profession' of the stage, *Her World against a Lie* focuses upon literature as a suitable career for women. Published in 1878, this novel features a strong, independent heroine, who, like Rachel in Yonge's *The Clever Woman of the Family*, is a 'clever woman'.[76] Hephzibah Horton is not new to her profession like Margaret Oliphant's Agnes Atheling, or Yonge's inexperienced Rachel and coy Ermine, but is already established in her career of journalism. Thus, the focus of this novel is not on woman's negotiation of a professional identity, but rather on her maintenance of one. The 'world' of the title which is under threat is not that of Hep (as the narrator calls her), but of Delia Moray, Hep's younger friend, who is an actress and a victim of domestic violence. Although the limits of space do not allow for a fuller exploration here, domestic violence is a subject that Marryat explored in other novels. In *My Own Child*, Marryat's last novel to be serialised in *London Society*, the heroine's daughter is repeatedly beaten by her drunken husband. In *The Nobler Sex*, the heroine describes being beaten, thrown down the stairs, hit and spat at in the face. In this novel, Delia is tied up by her husband and forced to witness him beating their child. Indeed, her representation of alcohol-fuelled violence in this novel seems to echo the scenes of domestic violence in Eliot's 'Janet's Repentance' (1858), and in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848).[77] Hep is investigating the possibility of a legal separation when Delia's husband unexpectedly dies, suffering a fatal fit after attempting to murder his wife.

[76] Florence Marryat, *Her World against a Lie* (Richard Edward King Limited: [no place of publication given], [no date given]), p.225. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.
[77] For more on domestic violence in Brontë's novel, see Martin J. Wiener, 'Alice Arden to Bill Sikes: Changing Nightmares of Intimate Violence in England, 1558-1869', *The Journal of British Studies*, vol. 40, no. 2 (April 2001), pp.184-212. For a fascinating insight into the neglected subject of Helen's art work in this novel, see Antonia Losano, 'The Professionalization of the Woman Artist in Anne Bronte's "The Tenant of Wildfell Hall"', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, vol. 58, no. 1 (June 2003).

When Delia's brother-in-law threatens to take custody of her child, she commits the 'lie' of the title and burns her marriage certificate, leading him to believe that her son is illegitimate, and therefore he has no claim on her child. After Delia's husband dies, Hep helps her to move abroad with her son. Hep, meanwhile, continues to work and resist the proposals of her solicitor, Mr Bond. When Delia returns to England some ten years later, she finds Hep removed from London and married to Mr Bond.

This novel was the first of many that Marryat adapted for the stage, and in which she played the leading role. In an interview in 1883, Marryat was asked whether she acted because she liked it, or for the 'sordid return'. Her answer mirrors the honesty of her working heroines: 'Both', she replied, '[a]cting gratifies my inclinations and the pay satisfies my necessities'.[78] In 1881, Marryat took the 'strong-minded, masculine' role of Hep, whom Kate Newey describes as 'an independent literary woman and advocate of women's rights',[79] although Helen Black described Hep as 'the chief comedy part'.[80] Peggy Russo tells us that the playbill advertised that it had been '[p]layed with Great Success in the Provinces for over Five Months'.[81] The *Athenaeum* thought the play was 'wearisomely long' and on the whole 'indifferently acted', but that Marryat showed 'genuine ability, uncultivated as yet, but capable of cultivation'.[82]

Just as Marryat was depicted in *London Society* as working at home, so this novel opens with the woman writer at home:

> Mrs. Hephzibah Horton has just come in from a weary trudge through the mud and the grease of the city on a foggy November afternoon; from standing in

[78] [Anonymous], 'An Interview with Miss Florence Marryat', *The Pall Mall Gazette* (16 May 1883) [no page number given].
[79] Katherine Newey, *Women's Theatre Writing in Victorian Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.181.
[80] Black, *Notable Women Authors of the Day*, p.90.
[81] Peggy Russo, 'The 1880 – 1881 Season', [http://www.emich.edu/public/english/adelphi_calendar/hst1880.htm, accessed 28 May 2009].
[82] Cited in Russo, 'The 1880 – 1881 Season', [no page number given].

> dingy offices until pert clerks shall have thought fit to deliver her messages to their masters; from fighting her way into omnibuses over a *chevaux de frize* of damp umbrellas and dirty petticoats, and she thinks she has earned the right to make herself comfortable. (*World*, p.1)

Hep is clearly active in literary London, but she is also depicted at the heart of the home. This passage can be read as a metaphor for Hep's career, for she begins by battling her way through the busy London streets, 'fighting' the crowds and office clerks, with the ultimate goal of returning to the sanctuary of the home. However, as I mentioned in my discussion of Margaret Oliphant in Chapter One and Charlotte Yonge in Chapter Two, home is where the work is. The narrator comments that for 'professional writers' like Hep, 'there is no afternoon or evening, or rather, these periods are their times for reaping that which they must garner in their homes' (*World*, p.36). In this first chapter, we see Hep preparing for a day of work, reading the newspapers, writing an article for an Australian newspaper and preparing book reviews for the fictional magazine the *Aurora*.

Hep is described as a 'serious' author for although her writing is 'marketable', it is not designed for the uneducated reader. The narrator explains that she is 'not a fashionable novelist, able to command a thousand pounds for a thousand pages of bad grammar and worse taste: she is obliged to be as careful of her diction as of her subject, for she writes chiefly for the press' (*World*, p.3). Despite her marketability, Hep, like Armgart and Leonora, fears the loss of her gift, that her 'brain and hand should fail, and old age be cast upon the mercy of the world' (*World*, p.3). However, Hep is more resilient than Eliot's artist-professionals, for she simply 'shakes' her fear of destitution off with 'Pooh, pooh! […] so long as one has a head left on one's shoulders, there must be *something* in the world that a woman can do' (*World*, p.4).

Described as having 'the spirit of a man cased in a woman's body', Hep complicates gendered notions of identity, like Mollie in *The Nobler Sex*, who

complains that '[h]aving to earn my own living and to think and act for myself has made me more of a man than a woman' (*Nobler*, p.197). Indeed, her comments may remind us of the description of George Eliot as a 'man-woman'.[83] Hep's ambition is presented in direct contrast to matrimony in the first chapter; the narrator suggests that it is her ambition to support herself that has been 'so antagonistic' to men (*World*, p.3). As such, Hep does not have to fight to achieve a place in her profession; she has done that already. She has to fight to retain some sort of professional identity that will sit easily alongside the role of wife, something which *My Sister the Actress* suggests is difficult for women to achieve. Although she is unmarried at the beginning of the novel, she nevertheless employs the title of 'Mrs'. As the narrator explains:

> *Miss* Hephzibah Horton is her legal denomination […] but she stands out for the 'Mistress' before her name on the plea that no woman has a better right to bear it than she who has never been a slave. And since she has turned the corner of the forties, nobody dreams of disputing her right to do as she thinks best in the matter. (*World*, p.2)

Like George Eliot, Hep knows the value of the social status of *feme covert*, the married woman. Indeed, Hep draws attention to how useful this can be in the workplace, explaining that her editor would never keep 'Mrs Hephzibah Horton' waiting outside his office, but that he would have kept a 'Miss' waiting for an hour. (*World*, p.11)

Like Eliot, who set some of her novels within the lifetime of her readers, Marryat set this novel in the 1860s in order to explore recent gender politics, and the passage of time is measured in changes to legislation relating to women. The narrator comments: 'in the days that we first meet Mrs. Hephzibah her sex had not pushed its ways to the front as it has since done, and it was the exception for women to do any work at all, far less to make any marketable use of their labour' (*World*, p.3). There were many changes to the marriage laws at this time, and the narrative begins after the

[83] Stoddard, 'George Eliot', *Exits and Entrances*, p.144.

watershed Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857, which established the new divorce courts, and continues through to the most recent Married Women (Maintenance in Case of Desertion) Act of 1886.[84] In the second volume, Hep acknowledges these most recent changes by saying: 'my opinions have not changed, but the times have. We haven't been standing still for the past fourteen years' (*World*, p.121). At the start of the novel, Hep considered marriage to be 'bondage worse than death' (*World*, p.67); what changes her mind about matrimony is the change in legislation, after which Hep deems marriage to be 'not half the slavery it used to be' (*World,* p.119), echoing the colonial language of Mollie in *The Nobler Sex* who describes 'wives' as 'white slaves' (*Nobler*, p.256).

Both Delia and Hep are forced by circumstance to work for a living: Hep in order to sustain her independence and Delia in order to support herself and her child. Delia is particularly torn by her dual role of worker and mother to her child, who suffers by her absence, as the narrator explains: 'As an infant he could not have proper care; she used to be obliged to leave him in the evenings, whilst she went to the theatre, to the tender mercies of her landladies, and his constitution has suffered from neglect' (*World*, p.19). Like Leonora and Armgart, Delia performs on the public stage, but unlike Eliot's characters who perform in the best operas, Delia is a popular player, working in a music hall called The Corinthian. She is similar to Gwendolen in that 'she can sing a little', 'dance a little' and 'can speak her part well'. In the following passage, the narrator describes her experience of being on stage:

> The part she has to play to-night – a secondary character in the opening farce – she has acted over and over again, until she is utterly sick of it. […] She walks on the stage and goes through her part almost mechanically; words and gestures following each other in the old accustomed way, whilst the actress's

[84] See Lee Holcombe, *Wives and Property: Reform of the Married Women's Property Law in Nineteenth-Century England* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1983), p.257.

> heart is brooding […]. And she is walking, and talking, and acting in a dream. (*World*, p.15)

This is the kind of 'stagey' acting that Bertha and Mirah work hard to avoid. Delia is not 'possessed' by her character as Bertha is; however, she is represented here as 'unconscious', so that she is unaware of her own presence on stage, in effect saving her from the indignity of the music hall. Despite the fact that she performs popular pieces, rather than opera, Delia still defines herself as a professional. Although her husband calls her a 'second-rate actress', the sympathies of the narrator towards her work are clear (*World*, p.32). When an audience member describes Delia as a 'fast' woman, because she is on stage, the narrator interrupts to defend her: 'Little does she imagine that the object of her pity is a wife and mother – as virtuous as herself, and far more praiseworthy for being so' (*World*, p.19). The narrator's comments suggest that Delia is all the more of a professional because of her family commitments, not in spite of them. Again, family commitments justify her presence on the public stage in a way not possible for women who were not also playing the roles of wife and mother.

Set against the backdrop of Delia's abusive marriage is Hep's romance with Mr Bond, a relationship which she fears will threaten her identity as an independent woman and journalist. Their courtship is described in mockingly gentle terms throughout the first two volumes, until Hep relents (on the changing of the marriage legislation) and agrees to marry Bond. As the plot focuses upon Delia and her struggle to retain custody of her son, the reader learns of Hep's wedding only after the event, when she explains to Delia that: '[h]e's been bothering me to do it, on and off, for the last twenty years […] I've chained myself down to be a slave for the remainder of my life' (*World*, p.201). Again, Hep evokes the figure of the slave to describe the position of a wife, but she also appears to enjoy her newly married state. Significantly, her change in role demands a change in location, and she moves out of the city, the space

in which she enjoyed her mobility as a professional woman, to the Hampshire countryside, where she is described as 'enjoying it all thoroughly' (I will return to the representation of London in my Conclusion). The narrator continues:

> Notwithstanding all her asseverations to the contrary, which are but dying struggles to maintain the independence for which she has fought so long, she has become a perfect child in her enthusiasm over the roses with which the garden abounds, and gathers one after another until her hands are filled with a huge bouquet of every coloured sweet (*World*, p.211).

Now playing the role of wife, Hep appears unable and unwilling to sustain the role of worker. This is because, far from being the bondage that she had envisaged, marriage offers Hep freedom from the necessity of work. In other words, she can adopt the persona of the genteel amateur that Ermine assumes in *The Clever Woman of the Family*:

> No more drudgery, no more care or anxiety for the morrow, no more work in spite of pain or trouble or heart-sickness, but a peaceful and well-provided-for existence […]. Her girlhood, which should have bloomed like those roses, and been as free from care, was swallowed up in a necessity of work (*World*, p.213).

It is notable that whereas in Charlotte Yonge's fiction, 'drudgery' tends to be associated with wifehood, here the suggestion is that depending upon herself for a living as a form of 'drudgery' has prematurely aged Hep. She therefore turns her home into her work, illustrating Monica Cohen's concept of 'professional domesticity'. The transition from worker to wife is worth examining in detail:

> A working literary life spoils a woman for the drudgery of domestic management, which is an art in itself. If you have been used to concentrate your own thoughts upon your own work or that of others – to live an interior life in a far-away world that has nothing in common with the sphere you dwell in, it is very difficult to enter with real interest into the discussion of how much rice is required for a pudding, of how many hours the leg of mutton should hang before the fire. And by this I do not wish to intimate that I join the usual cry that a literary woman must needs be a slattern or an ill-manager. […] on the contrary, it increases her capacity for all sorts of work, but the two cannot run together with the attention that each deserves. A man is not expected to carry on his work at office, or on the Stock Exchange, and attend to his kitchen and nursery at the same time; and a woman can hardly be supposed to do more than a man, though she often does so (*World*, pp.215-216).

In this passage, the domestic becomes a form of 'drudgery' but also an 'art', suggesting it demands patience, skill and hard work. Hep, like Isabel in *Dynevor Terrace*, struggles to show any interest in domestic duties, and the narrator insists that while the literary woman is no doubt capable of domestic management, the two careers 'cannot run together with the attention that each deserves'. For Marryat, a woman must either do domestic work or write, she cannot do both. The analogy her narrator draws to a man working in the Stock Exchange is pertinent, for it suggests that authorship is just as demanding as a job in finance, and that women should not be expected to attend to domestic duties after they have attended to their writing, just as a man would not be expected to run the household after coming home from working in the City.

Unlike Mirah, whose work is not mentioned once she gets engaged, or Bertha, whose story ends with her engagement, Hep's life after marriage is described by the narrator. Although she is now removed from London, Hep's long career has ensured her 'literary reputation' and, like Isabel, she continues to write, but does not publish:

> So, whilst Delia undertakes the labour, which is next to nothing when undertaken alone, of management of the household affairs, Mrs. Bond is to be allowed to sit in the pleasant little study allotted to her private use, and indulge in scribbling or reading, or anything that strikes her fancy (*World*, p.216).

Like Ermine, Hep seems to represent the genteel amateur in this passage, 'scribbling' away at home, writing on what ever 'strikes her fancy' with no pressure to write what will sell or please public taste. However, Hep is figured in an office here: she has her own private 'study' into which she retreats in order to work, and in fact Delia is employed to run the household, adding to the tone of genteel amateurism in that she can afford to employ another woman to do her domestic chores. Thus Marryat offers her readers a complex and at times contradictory representation of the female artist-professional: while she depicts female ambition to be a positive force and celebrates

women's professional success, she also shows the burden of being the sole wage earner, of relying on art to sustain a livelihood, as physically and mentally draining, as Marryat herself found it to be. For Marryat, women were able to succeed as artist-professionals, but they were also ultimately exhausted by the experience if they completely relied on their earnings. Marriage, rather than silencing women artists as it does in Eliot and tends to in Yonge's fiction, seems to offer Marryat's heroines a way out of that drudgery, for their husbands shoulder the financial burden of the family, leaving them free to practise their art for pleasure and as a hobby, ironically returning to the status of amateur. No mention is made of Hep's selling her work: she can now afford to write because she wants to, not because she has to.

The heroine of *A Rational Marriage* is, like Bertha in *My Sister the Actress*, a young woman just starting out in her career. Joan is a New Woman who, at twenty-two, has moved out of her family home to live and work in London, a choice which is described as 'a great disgrace to the family', who 'feel it terribly'.[85] Unlike Hep, who resists marriage for the majority of her life, Joan wants to marry her *beau* Larry O'Donnell, but does not want the bondage associated with being a wife. For Joan, the roles of wife and worker are incompatible. Whereas Hep's solution was to embrace marriage and give up publication, Joan convinces Larry to enter into a 'rational marriage':

> 'If people want to be married, to have a licence for being the closest of friends, well, let them – but why in the name of goodness should they alter all their lives on that account – give up their ambitions, their fancies, their friends, and settle down in the same house to bore each other from morning till night! […] if I were married – which I am not such a fool as to contemplate – why should I not continue to occupy my own little flat, and to be secretary to Lord Mauleverer, and generally to look after myself' (*Rational*, p.24).

[85] Florence Marryat, *A Rational Marriage* (London: F. V. White, 1899), p.40. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text. I am grateful to Deborah Wynne for pointing out that the plot of *A Rational Marriage* is strikingly similar to Eliza Lynn Linton's first New Woman novel, *The Rebel of the Family* (1888), published nineteen years before Marryat's novel.

Joan's ideal of marriage is, however, very different from Larry's, who feels that '*[h]is* wife must be all his own; as much his property as his hair-brush or his razor; and he must be the master of all things!' *(Rational*, p.28). Importantly, for my purposes, Joan's notion of marriage involves not giving up her profession, but jointly writing a novel with Larry, and in this her career seems to echo the ideal that Eliot articulated in her review of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poetry. We may remember that Eliot praised Barrett Browning as a woman who was able to 'superadd' 'masculine vigor, breadth, and culture' with 'feminine subtlety of perception, feminine quickness of sensibility, and feminine tenderness'.[86] Whilst this ideal was completely unworkable for Marryat, who made her living from writing sensation fiction, this is precisely what her heroine achieves in *A Rational Marriage*.

Writing for a living is represented on both sides of the gender divide in this novel for Larry is a 'smart journalist by profession', who dismissively refers to himself as 'only a penny-a-liner', writing for the fictional magazines the *Queen*, *Scraps* and the wittily named *The Pink'un* (*Rational*, p.10). Joan, however, works by day as a secretary to Lord Mauleverer, typing out his Parliamentary speeches and having 'to correct and improve [them] into the bargain' (*Rational*, p.18). By night, Joan types up the manuscripts of her friends and works on her own novel:

> *She* also had conceived and was producing a cherished child of her brain - a novel which she wrote in leisure moments, and in which she was trying to depict the awful effects of a domestic tragedy which she had met in real life – where the ruin of a family and the misery of a husband and children were brought about by the wife and mother contracting the fatal habit of inebriety. (*Rational*, p.31)

The language of procreation is striking in this passage: like Yonge in *Womankind*, Marryat figures writing as a specifically female act of creation here. Joan 'conceived' an idea for her novel, and her book is described as a 'cherished child' of her brain.

[86] [Eliot], 'Belles Lettres', p.306.

Professionalism and procreation are fused so that authorship is depicted as an essentially feminine role. But at this early stage in her career as a novelist, Joan poses as an amateur, presenting her writing to Larry as a hobby, claiming that she 'half did it to amuse [herself] in the evenings, when [she] had no other work to do' (*Rational*, p.33). Joan's negotiation of a professional identity is further defined by domesticity for she couches her writing in terms of selfless service:

> She was not a conceited girl, and did not think much of her own work; but she had familiarized herself with her subject, and thought if it were likely to do good, that she would write it all over again, sooner than miss the opportunity of being some good to her fellow-creatures (*Rational*, p.31).

As is the case for Yonge's heroines (and indeed Yonge herself), Joan's work is figured as valuable because it is 'useful' to others. Indeed, her selflessness is emphasised when, on finding that Larry is writing a very similar novel to her own, she tells him 'nothing would have induced me to come into the market against you' (*Rational*, p.35). She does not doubt her own ability to write a novel, yet, playing the role of the coy authoress, Joan does not challenge a man already established in the field. However, when Larry burns his manuscript it is Joan who suggests rewriting the novel together, to be published under both their names: 'we'll make a beautiful book of it between us, which shall take the world by storm' (*Rational*, p.35). Again, the language of procreation and professionalism merges here as the two writers join together in a creative act to produce something which shares the qualities of each but which is a unique combination of the two.

As in *Her World against a Lie*, marriage quickly becomes the factor that will test Joan's ability to remain a professional. Objecting to what her sister considers the 'happy ending' of William Makepeace Thackeray's *The Newcomes* (1853-1855), Joan comments 'that's just the mistake of novels […] the lovely wedding comes at the end, just where the misery begins' (*Rational*, p.122). Due to a clause in her grandfather's

will, Joan and Larry are forced to marry in secret, but Joan draws up a prenuptial agreement, which includes the stipulations of a 'rational marriage': to never meet without an appointment, to accept each other's friends and 'pursuits', to never demand money, and to show no signs of being married, including Joan keeping her name. As Larry concludes: 'No wedding, no honeymoon, no congratulations, no Mrs. O'Donnell, and, I conclude, no wedding-ring' (*Rational*, p.64). Despite these conditions, once she is married, Joan finds that she 'no longer (notwithstanding the list of conditions) belonged to herself' (*Rational,* p.79).

The demands of the romance plot mean that the issue of the jointly authored book between Joan and Larry fades as the narrative progresses. Joan's unhappy marriage, which quickly descends into a farce, is contrasted with one that is truly happy. As Joan's newly-wed friend claims:

> 'it's the beautiful security and freedom in marriage that makes it so happy. To feel that you actually *belong* to your husband – that you have a right to appeal to him for advice or assistance or protection whenever you require it' (*Rational*, p.144).

The thorny issue of 'belonging' aside, these comments seem to reflect some of the appreciation of freedom that Hep expresses in *Her World against a Lie.* For both characters, marriage seems to offer both the 'security' and 'freedom' that Joan now begins to appreciate. As in *Her World against a Lie,* this novel presents a heroine who was too quick to judge the married state. Her friend's marriage is, however, a model of marriage that Joan learns to adapt to, for when Larry travels to the Soudan without her, she worries that he has 'no wife […] to prove herself his companion and helpmeet' (*Rational,* p.205). It is, however, only when Larry is out of the country that Joan is able to turn her thoughts back to her unfinished manuscript.

Having grown wiser from her experience of being married, and temporarily removed from London, Joan is finally able to finish her book. With the benefit of time, Joan is able to edit her work and see it afresh through 'clearer eyes':

> It came almost as a revelation to her; she had half forgotten what she had written; she read the sentences as if they transcribed the thoughts of someone else, and criticised them in like measure. She had tried very hard, as was said at first, to make her story natural; to show, without prejudice or exaggeration [….] how the fatal habit of drinking had commenced in carelessness. […] She had painted it in detail and very faithfully, and as she read it over with clearer eyes than she had been able to give it, during the hurried and excited time of writing, Joan was astonished to find that she had advocated the very virtues that she has most stringently refused in her own person to recognize as such (*Rational,* p.217).

Having had the benefit of reading Larry's work, Joan now realises that her attempt at sympathetically portraying a woman's life blighted by alcoholism had in fact gone wrong. She had, in short, written a 'silly novel', doing damage to the cause that she had meant to support. But like Hep, Joan is able to reconnect with her writing when away from London, deftly editing her work and superadding her ideas with Larry's style, producing a far superior product for publication: 'As she retraced her sentences, Larry's superior phrases and metaphors came into her mind, until she hardly knew whether the book was his or hers' (*Rational,* p.218). Marryat represents an ideal combination of male and female talent here; Joan seems able to appreciate Larry's 'masculine vigor, breadth, and culture' and 'superadd' it to her own 'feminine subtlety of perception, feminine quickness of sensibility, and feminine tenderness'.[87] In other words, Joan is able to bring feminine feeling to Larry's cultured writing, meaning that the end result is something that satisfies both demands: art as refining work that earns her a living. This process of superadding her skills to Larry's not only results in an improved novel but also a new understanding of what her marriage

[87] [Eliot], 'Belles Lettres', p.306.

should be, that they should 'walk together as friends, and duly weigh the value of each other's words and counsel' (*Rational*, p.218).

Joan returns to London alone to sell her book, which she calls *Mrs Trelawny*, offering it to a 'second-rate publisher' because she is distraught at being separated from Larry. As with some of the other novels discussed here, it would seem that the demands of the romance plot ultimately overwhelm the representation of the female artist-professional. The conclusion of the novel focuses upon Joan and Larry's reconciliation and their future life together; no further mention is made of their book. Having explored the challenges faced by the literary woman in *The Nobler Sex* and *Her World against a Lie, A Rational Marriage* seems to describe an ideal of combining female and male literary skills, but cannot sustain this beyond the demands of the romance plot. Yet it appears that whilst this novel may represent this combination as an ideal, the demands of genre meant that Marryat concluded with a focus on romance, not working life. In other words, Joan may have achieved the ideal of combining masculine and feminine writing, but the role of wife still eclipses the role of worker, as it does for Bertha and Hep.

So Marryat, like Eliot, wrote about women artists beginning and ending their careers, and like Eliot, her heroines normally renounce their vocation once they are married. Although Marryat's fiction is radically different from Eliot's and Yonge's, her work shares the emphasis on the useful tactic of posing as an amateur when starting out on a career, like Bertha in *My Sister the Actress*, or when nearing the end of one, like Hep in *Her World against a Lie*. However, Marryat was more forthright than Eliot or Yonge in representing women as relying on, and enjoying, their work. She did, however, also present the roles of wife and worker as opposites that do not sit easily with one another: the one case in which a woman is able to play both roles is

that of a widow who in fact lives alone. It seems that for Marryat, as for Eliot and Yonge, while domestic ideology was useful for women seeking to negotiate a public persona, the reality of wifehood and motherhood often threatened women's ability to carry on working.

**Conclusion**

In 1875 Marryat's doctors 'recommended rest from literature', so she gave up her post as editor and, in an interesting reversal of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's career, took to the stage.[88] As Palmer notes, Marryat's career is notable for the different professions she practised at any one time, and during the 1870s in particular Marryat managed to balance several careers at once.[89] When she was new to editorship, she also became involved in the theatre, writing a successful melodrama with Sir Charles Young (a regular contributor to *London Society*) called *Miss Chester*, which was performed in October 1872 at the Holborn Theatre in London. Marryat's novel *No Intentions*, her first novel to be serialised in *London Society* in 1873, carried a dedication to her 'friend and fellow-worker, Sir Charles Lawrence Young…in remembrance of the first representation of "Miss Chester"', giving an indication of how even early in her career Marryat could successfully blend the roles of novelist and playwright (*No Intentions*, p.1).[90] She toured the provincial theatres with George Grossmith in 1876 and took the lead role in *Her World against a Lie* in 1881.

Marryat first appeared on the stage as part of a charity performance for the widow of Shirley Brooks, who had been the editor of *Punch* and occasionally contributed to *London Society*. She played the lead role in *The Wonderful Woman* at St. George Hall in London, in which 'the audience was large; all the new private

[88] Black, *Notable Women Authors of the Day*, p.90.
[89] Palmer, 'Florence Marryat, Theatricality and Performativity', p.1.
[90] See Newey, *Women's Theatre Writing in Victorian Britain*, pp.182-184 for a discussion of *Miss Chester*.

boxes were occupied, and of course there was a considerable gathering of literary people'.[91] The reviews were generally positive, with one critic claiming that she showed 'a great deal of talent'.[92] Although described in some reviews as 'Mrs. Ross Church', Marryat was generally referred to as 'Miss Florence Marryat', and thus she began her theatrical career as she did as her literary one, by referencing her father. Like Kate/Mrs Potter in *My Sister the Actress*, Marryat took advantage of using both names here, the respected and well-known name of her father and the respected title of 'Mrs', thus presenting herself as both a 'dutiful daughter' and a married woman. If her heroines struggled to play both roles of wife and worker, it would seem that Marryat did not, adding 'daughter' to 'wife' and 'actress', the list of identities which she performed through her 'self-created Self'.[93] Following the vogue for celebrity reading tours, in 1874 Marryat began the first of many reading tours.[94] She proved a success in London and also toured Scotland, Ireland and England. During these recitals, Marryat read aloud selected extracts from Shakespeare's plays, as well as from the works of her father, Charles Dickens and extracts from her own novels. As Palmer notes, Marryat was 'unafraid to adopt and inhabit the identities of the most revered authors, poets and historians', but she also 'frequently adapted them, often to include chunks of her own writing'.[95] The manuscripts of her readings show that Marryat did much more than 'include chunks of her own writing' for she heavily edited selections from Dickens, Shakespeare and her father, writing notes to herself in the margins such as 'Laugh', 'Broken voice' and 'Simple tone', deleted paragraphs,

[91] [Anonymous], 'Advertisements and Notices', *Western Mail* (17 July 1874), [no page number given].
[92] [Anonymous], 'Advertisements and Notices'. *Western Mail* [no page number given].
[93] Linton, *My Literary Life*, p.99.
[94] For more on Dickens's reading tours see Malcolm Andrews, *Charles Dickens and his Performing Selves: Dickens and the Public Readings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[95] Palmer, 'Florence Marryat, Theatricality and Performativity', p.16.

moved sentences and added her own.[96] Marryat proved a great success, with *The Belfast News-Letter* describing her as 'THE GREAT SHAKESPERIAN READER', claiming that she had been '[p]ronounced by the English and Irish Press the greatest living Elocutionist of the age'.[97] Initially, the combined roles of editor and orator appeared to complement each other:

> Miss Florence Marryat, the distinguished reader, is about to favour Belfast with readings. Dramatic readings seem to offer many attractions to men and women of letters, and we are, therefore, not surprised to find Miss Marryat varying her occupation as editor of *London Society* by giving readings. The entertainment promises to be one of a very high order.[98]

These recitals were clearly very useful in providing further publicity for *London Society*, and with her increasing success Marryat took her tour to Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Belfast in 1875.

Rumours soon circulated in the periodical press that Marryat had 'received tempting offers to read in the United States', and indeed, like many successful novelists before her (notably Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins and her own father) Marryat did travel to America to conduct a reading tour during the 1880s.[99] Her increasingly busy and varied career meant that Marryat was forced to give up the editorship of *London Society*, but she did not give up her writing. During the 1890s, she set up her 'School of Literary Art' and was involved in forming the new Society of Authors. The publication of spiritualist texts such as *The Risen Dead* (1891), *There is No Death* (1892), *The Clairvoyance of Bessie Williams* (1893) and *The Spirit World* (1894) capitalised on the reputation she had established through *London Society* as a spiritualist. During the 1890s she once again embarked on a lecture tour to promote *The Spirit World* and spiritualism in general, thus fashioning herself as 'an advocate

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[96] Notebook in Marryat Family Papers, MSS. 104 (GENM), Beinecke Library, Yale University. Uncat.
[97] [Anonymous], 'Advertisements and Notices', *The Belfast News-Letter* (6 February 1875), [no page number listed].
[98] [Anonymous], 'Advertisements and Notices', *The Belfast News-Letter*, [no page number listed].
[99] [Anonymous], 'Literary and Art Gossip', *The Leeds Mercury* (3 June 1874), [no page number given].

for spiritualism', a 'self-appointed role', which, Andrew Maunder suggests, attracted ridicule as well as interest.[100]

Typically, Marryat saw the business potential in maintaining a dual identity of 'spiritualist' and 'sensationalist', and thus in this last stage of her career she marketed herself as 'a novelist of the occult'.[101] The strength of this identity is borne out in George and Weedon Grossmith's tongue-in-check reference to Marryat in *A Diary of Nobody* (1892) as 'Florence Singleyet', (a pun on Marryat's status as a divorceé) the author of '*There is No Birth*'. It was, as Ed Glinert has noted, 'a crude pun' on the name of 'George Grossmith's stage partner, Florence Marryat', whom Glinert describes as 'an ardent spiritualist who persuaded George to take part in a séance in 1876 (an experience he found impossible to take seriously)'.[102] Talia Schaffer has described Marryat as part of a 'newer generation of sensation writers', including Marie Corelli and Violet Fane, who 'wrote novels that generally described supernatural doings in high society', the sensation novel of the 1890s differing from that of the 1860s in that 'it usually centred around the spiritual rather than the criminal; a character's illicit knowledge often came through hypnosis or telepathy'.[103] Marryat's identity as a sensation novelist (founded in the 1860s), and a spiritualist (founded in the 1870s through *London Society*), meant that she was well placed to capitalise on this wave of spiritualist sensationalism in the 1890s.

We have seen that Marryat, like Yonge and Eliot, attempted to describe a brand of women's professionalism that was based upon domestic ideology, infused with a sense of hard work and striving for excellence, which enabled women to pose as amateurs as long as it was useful for them to do so. More than Eliot or Yonge,

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[100] Maunder, 'Introduction', *Domestic Sensationalism*, p.xv.
[101] Maunder, 'Introduction', *Domestic Sensationalism*, p.xv.
[102] Ed Glinert, in George and Weedon Grossmith, *A Diary of Nobody* (London: Penguin, 1999), p.217.
[103] Schaffer, *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes*, p.37.

Marryat seemed able to present the female artist-professional as relishing her success once she became established in her career, as Marryat herself was able to do. Katherine Newey suggests that '[a]lthough Marryat's work lacks the explicit political dimension of her near contemporary New Woman writers, her dramatization of the feeling woman as a passionate and powerful speaking subject [is] ideologically challanging'.[104] However, Marryat seemed to share with Eliot and Yonge a frustration with combining the roles of wife and worker. Marryat's artist-professional heroines, like Eliot's and Yonge's, are often unable to sustain both roles: so whilst domestic ideology may have been helpful whilst setting up a career, in that women were able to present writing as a hobby that fits comfortably in family life, and justifying a prominent position in the public sphere, the reality of marriage and children seems to eclipse professional life for these women. In my Conclusion, I turn briefly to the 1890s in order to consider how one woman author-editor negotiated her professional identity, and represented that process in her fiction, within the context of the *fin de siècle*, which bought with it the more liberated figure of the New Woman and the changing climate of New Journalism.

[104] Newey, *Women's Theatre Writing in Victorian Britain*, p.182.

## Conclusion

'Once upon a time, when I was an Editor…'.[1]

This was how Ella Hepworth Dixon, New Woman novelist and editor of *The Englishwoman* magazine, began an article in which she wrote about her experience of editorship and authorship. The dreamlike quality with which she began her article echoes George Eliot's tone in 'How I Came to Write Fiction', in which she states 'it had always been a vague dream' to write.[2] Dixon's '[o]nce upon a time' also echoes the fairy tale persona of Charlotte Yonge as Mother Goose: it is a beginning that invites readers to settle around the storyteller and indulge in a daydream. All the women author-editors that I have discussed in this thesis were ambitious (despite the fact that they were sometimes nervous about representing ambitious women in their fiction). For each, editorship was an integral part of their dream of authorship. For George Eliot, editorship served as an apprenticeship in which she learnt the skills of her trade and prepared for a career of fiction writing; for Charlotte Yonge, editorship was a permanent role that complemented a lifetime of authorship and afforded her the opportunity of mentoring other women writers; for Florence Marryat, editorship was a means through which she could capitalise on her growing celebrity and be introduced to other opportunities for work (such as acting).

In the preceding chapters, I have aimed to examine the process of negotiation through which George Eliot, Charlotte Yonge and Florence Marryat developed their distinct and unique professional identities, so that we might not only understand women's journalism at mid-century better, but also appreciate canonical figures like Eliot in a new light, learn more about those on the edge of the canon like Yonge, and recover forgotten writers like Marryat from critical obscurity. I have explored the

[1] Ella Hepworth Dixon, in Valerie Fehlbaum, *Ella Hepworth Dixon: The Story of a Modern Woman* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p.74.
[2] Eliot, 'How I Came to Write Fiction', p.322.

practices that these women adopted as journalists and the strategies they had in common, as well as some important differences. In bringing together this diverse group of writers, I have demonstrated how women writing for different readerships responded to the demands of the mid-Victorian periodical press, and their roles within it, in similar ways through the practices of anonymity, male pseudonyms, signature and posing as amateurs. There was during the period of 1850-1880 a perceived increase of female authors, a growing perception of women's writing as low art, and the professionalization of the literary arts, a process which tended to exclude women. These three women did not write for the feminist press, and so were seeking to identify themselves as professionals within the context of magazines aimed at a general readership, and within a marketplace still dominated by men. I have sought to describe how each woman negotiated a professional identity within this context, suggesting that while Eliot called for women to act as professionals, Yonge and Marryat presented themselves as amateurs, while working tirelessly as professionals. Once established, each sought to present her writing as a spiritual product and often figured domesticity and amateurism as most useful for women starting out in their careers. The fiction of the women in this thesis suggests that the mid-Victorian ideal of domesticity could prove useful when constructing a professional persona. By figuring writing as a hobby which could be fitted around the more pressing demands of the home, authorship was linked to amateurism and to domesticity in a useful way and through this tactic, women artists were able to negotiate a professional identity in a challenging climate. The work of Florence Marryat in particular anticipates that of the New Woman novelists of the 1880s and 1890s, and although the remit of my thesis does not allow for an examination of *fin de siècle* literary culture, I would like

to conclude by briefly examining the career of Ella Hepworth Dixon, a New Woman author-editor whose life and fiction are particularly relevant to my research.

**The New Woman Novelist**

The woman writer at mid-century often figured the home as conducive to a literary career, in part because she was largely excluded from public spaces. As Lyssa Randolph and Marion Shaw point out, the opening up of these spaces in the 1880s and 1890s was liberating for women seeking to define themselves as professional: 'the new department stores; literary and other Clubs; women-only restaurants, cafés and tearooms' and moving away from the parental home all allowed middle-class women to build 'personal and professional networks'.[3] The heroine of Dixon's *The Story of a Modern Woman* (1894), Mary Erle, experiences London as 'an oppressive, stifling, atmosphere that hangs heavily over the story from beginning to end'.[4] More usually, modern urban spaces and London's cityscape were presented as liberating for New Women, the figure of the female artist becoming linked to that of the *flâneuse*.[5] These 'semi-public spaces', as Emma Liggins has called them, formed an important part of the New Woman's freedoms, and the periodical press was one such space, as it had been for the women discussed in this thesis.[6] The 1880s and 1890s saw a surge in magazines designed for all readerships: fiction became shorter, serialised novels less popular, and the competition among rival magazines was greater than ever. As Mary herself comments, if she gave up her position as a regular magazine contributor, 'there would be a dozen women ready to snatch it from her'.[7] The feminist press,

[3] Lyssa Randolph and Marion Shaw, *New Women Writers of the Late Nineteenth Century* (Tavistock: Devon, Northcote, 2007), p.30.
[4] Steve Farmer, 'Introduction', in Ella Hepworth Dixon, *The Story of a Modern Woman*, ed. Steve Farmer (Plymouth: Broadview, 2004), p.23.
[5] Randolph and Shaw, *New Women Novelists,* p.30.
[6] Emma Liggins, *George Gissing, the Working Woman and Urban Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p.83.
[7] Ella Hepworth Dixon, *The Story of a Modern Woman*, ed. Steve Farmer (Plymouth: Broadview, 2004), p.133. All further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

which had its roots in women's magazines such as the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* (1852-1879) and the *Englishwoman's Journal* (1858-1864), emerged during this time with journals such as the *Women's Suffrage Journal* (1870–1890), the *Woman's Signal* (1894–1899) and *Shafts, a Paper for Women and the Working Class* (1892–1899), all edited by women. The foundation of *The Strand* in particular threatened other literary magazines; as one critic, comparing *The Strand* to Dixon's *Englishwoman*, commented: 'Starting with the doubt that there is place for yet another sixpenny magazine after the pattern of the *Strand,* there is little to be said for *The Englishwoman* save that it is neither better nor worse than the rest'.[8]

Although the mid-century saw increasing attempts by women writers to explore the experience of the artist-professional (inspired by texts such as Elizabeth Gaskell's *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*), the 1880s and 1890s saw an increase in books by women, about women who worked.[9] Sally Ledger has pointed out that the New Woman novel is notable for being 'peopled with female writers of feminist fiction' and indeed, artist-professional heroines feature in Mary Cholmondeley's *Red Pottage* (1889), Sarah Grand's *The Beth Book* (1897), George Patterson's (Emily Morse Symonds) *A Modern Amazon* (1894) and Mona Caird's *The Daughters of Danaus* (1894).[10] Indeed, George Egerton (Mary Chavelita Dunne Bright) wrote that:

> I realised that in literature, everything had been better done by man than woman could hope to emulate. There was only one small plot left for her to tell; the *terra incognita* of herself, as she knew herself to be, not as man liked to imagine her – in a word to give herself away, as man had given himself away in his writing.[11]

[8] Cited in Fehlbaum, *Ella Hepworth Dixon*, p.73.
[9] Randolph and Shaw, *New Woman Writers*, p.3.
[10] Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the fin de siècle* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), p.27.
[11] George Egerton, cited in Lyn Pykett, *The Improper Feminine*, p.177.

One of the most striking examples of Egerton's '*terra incognita* of herself' is Dixon's *The Story of a Modern Woman* in which the heroine strives to earn a living, first through painting and then through journalism and novel writing.

However, before I examine *The Story of a Modern Woman*, it is worth pausing briefly to consider Dixon's career for she, like the other women examined in this thesis, worked in journalism. Dixon edited *The Englishwoman* between March and August 1895 and also contributed to Oscar Wilde's *The Woman's World, The Sunday Times, The Lady's Pictoral,* the *Pall Mall Magazine, The Yellow Book, The Ladies' Field* and a Holiday Number of *London Society*, some thirteen years after Florence Marryat had resigned her editorship.[12] Although Dixon's life and work are still largely neglected by critics, recent research has highlighted her importance as a figure of *fin de siècle* literary culture, particularly for those scholars interested in the professionalisation of women writers.[13] Like George Eliot, Dixon adopted a pseudonym for the publication of her first fiction, a collection of short stories originally published in the *Lady's Pictorial* called *My Flirtations* (1892). However, unlike Eliot, Dixon chose a female name, publishing as 'Margaret Wynman'.

Valerie Fehlbaum has written that there was 'no deeper significance' to Dixon's use of a female pseudonym 'other than adding to the overall whimsical tone of the writing', and indeed her research into Dixon's correspondence suggests that this pseudonym was in fact the choice of her publishers, F. V. White and Co.[14] Explaining their preference for signature, the publishers wrote to Dixon that they normally advised their authors 'to secure to their own names any popularity that may

[12] Fehlbaum, *Ella Hepworth Dixon* pp.177-179.
[13] For example, Valerie Fehlbaum's recent biography has clarified Dixon's precise date of birth, which was previously contested.
[14] Fehlbaum, *Ella Hepworth Dixon*, p.89.

attract to a success' and that 'most pseudonyms are open secrets'.[15] So, although Dixon's first book was published under the name of 'Margaret Wynman', *The Story of a Modern Woman* was attributed to 'Ella Hepworth Dixon, ("Margaret Wynman", Author of "My Flirtations")'.[16] Fehlbaum reads Dixon's 'abandoning' her pseudonym as a sign that women were 'no longer hiding their identities, adopting a male persona or remaining silent, and were beginning to speak out in their own voices'.[17] However, Dixon's choice is made more complex when we consider that men were adopting women's pen names at this time: Arnold Bennett regularly published under a female persona for his work in *The Woman* magazine and Grant Allen's *The Type-Writer Girl* (1897) was published under the name of Olive Pratt Rayner.[18] This inversion of literary cross-dressing is a fascinating area for future research.

Despite the fact that Dixon was only just born when George Eliot published her first fiction in 1855, they faced many of the same difficulties as professional women. Indeed, Arnold Bennett's comments that a 'woman's sphere in journalism generally lies far away from the office or composing-room' is a truism exposed in *The Story of a Modern Woman* when Mary offers her first piece of fiction to an illustrated magazine, but must first 'overcome the scruples of the office boy [by] persuading him to take in her card' (*The Story,* p.108). The language of the battlefield was employed in articles in the periodical press on the subject of the woman writer in the 1880s as much as in the 1850s, with women still being described as encroaching into man's domain of journalism and denigrating the standards of literature. Within this context, as Fehlbaum has noted, much was made of women's maternal capacity. For example, in 'Women Editors of London', a series of articles published in *The Woman* which

[15] Fehlbaum, *Ella Hepworth Dixon*, p.91.
[16] Fehlbaum, *Ella Hepworth Dixon*, p.92.
[17] Fehlbaum, *Ella Hepworth Dixon*, p.117.
[18] For more on this book, see Clarissa J. Suranyi, 'Introduction', in Olive Pratt Rayner [Grant Allen], *The Type-Writer Girl* (Plymouth: Broadview, 2004), pp.1-16.

included a review of Dixon's career, 'emphasis was always placed on their [women writers'] "womanliness", their "unvarying kindness and courtesy", "their unimpeachable taste" and their overall refinement'.[19] Womanliness and refinement were, as we have seen, useful tools for women seeking to define themselves as professional.

When she became established in her career, Dixon was offered the editorship of *The Englishwoman*. Reflecting on this role, she wrote that:

> I suppose that every scribbler, some time in his life, aspires to be an editor. – When Messrs F. V. White and Company proposed last year to start a new magazine, *The Englishwoman,* and offered me the editorial arm-chair, I sank into it with much satisfaction. And then, for some six or seven months, life became a whirl of proof-sheets, process blocks, and printer's devils.[20]

As for Florence Marryat, the reputation of Dixon's famous father seemed to help her secure this role. William Dixon had edited *The Athenaeum* between 1853 and 1869, and reviews of her work referred to her father, suggesting that she had 'inherited her father's literary gifts', just as reviewers presumed that Florence Marryat had inherited Frederick Marryat's 'facile' pen.[21] As a consequence, Dixon's name as editor was, like Marryat's, advertised heavily. *The Englishwoman* was similar to *London Society* in that it was an illustrated magazine of 'fiction, fashion, society, and the home', offering 'stories by the most popular authors of the day', 'interviews with celebrities', and 'exhaustive articles on every topic connected with the house and home'.[22] *The Story of a Modern Woman,* however, was far from 'light literature', for in it, Dixon offered a notably bleak representation of the woman artist's life, and it is to this novel that I now turn.

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[19] Fehlbaum, *Ella Hepworth Dixon*, p.64.
[20] Cited in Fehlbaum, *Ella Hepworth Dixon*, p.73
[21] See Fehlbaum, *Ella Hepworth Dixon*, p.128.
[22] Fehlbaum, *Ella Hepworth Dixon*, p.72.

**The Woman Artist-Professional in Ella Hepworth Dixon's *The Story of a Modern Woman***

Like George Eliot, Dixon was a journalist before she was a novelist, and she was also, like Eliot, well into her thirties before she began writing fiction. *The Story of a Modern Woman* (Dixon's only novel), was originally serialised in the *Lady's Pictorial*, and is, by her own admission, a 'gloomy study of the struggles of a girl alone in the world and earning her own living'.[23] On the early death of her father, Mary is forced to earn her own living and support her younger brother who must go to Oxford: as she explains, 'grown-up brothers are so expensive' (*The Story,* p.130). She first attempts painting but, on failing to gain a place at the Royal Academy School, turns to journalism and novel writing. In order to succeed in the very competitive climate of New Journalism, Mary finds that she must sacrifice her ideal of literature as art in order to write what will sell. Although she is engaged for a brief period, Mary does not marry and the novel ends with her living alone, ill through over-work and supporting herself and her brother; as one critic put it '[n]ot a cheerful summary, to be sure'.[24]

Dixon wrote that the 'keynote of the book is the phrase: "All we modern women mean to help each other now. If we were united, we could lead the world." It is a plea for a kind of moral and social tradesunionism among women'.[25] This 'keynote' refers not only to Mary's story, but also that of her friend Alison Ives who escapes marriage to a man who has infected his dying mistress, known only as 'No. 27', with syphilis. The main focus of the narrative is, however, on Mary and her desire to work, and in the representation of her struggle and sacrifices, Dixon

[23] Ella Hepworth Dixon, *As I Knew Them: Sketches of People I Have Met on the Way* (London: Hutchinson, 1930), p.136.
[24] [Anonymous], 'New Books', *The New York Times* (10 June 1894), p.27.
[25] Cited in Dixon, *The Story of a Modern Woman,* p.194.

'deliberately darkened the image of the woman writer [and] artist'.[26] Work for Mary offers a route to 'independence, a profession, a happy union', in that order of priority (*The Story,* p.110). However, the notion of being 'of use', one that recurred in Charlotte Yonge's fiction in particular, is also evident here, for Mary imagines herself 'working, earning, helping' (*The Story,* p.101). Like Florence Marryat, Dixon dwelled upon the pleasure of work, unflinchingly eroticising the excitement that Mary feels on seeing a poster with her name on it:

> She passed a poster of *Illustrations,* with the name of her story in bright blue print, and Mary stood still and read it over and over again with a quickened pulse, until she was pushed aside by the tide of human beings eddying along the street (*The Story,* p.110).

Mary's pleasure here seems to echo that of Bertha in *My Sister the Actress* whose reaction to the joy of work is physical and sensual: her 'eyes dilate: her lips part; her colour comes and goes' (*My Sister,* p.170).

More than Eliot, Yonge or Marryat, Dixon showed the woman at work in this novel moving freely in spaces other than the home. In the passage below, the narrator describes Mary in her role as art critic for *Illustrations* magazine, scrutinising and evaluating the paintings of men and women in an art studio:

> she walked slowly, conscientiously round the room, stopping at every picture that she could possibly mention in her article, and stopping, too, before pictures she would have to mention whether she liked them or no. […] Marking with a pencil the titles of these works of art, she absolved her conscience by making some elaborate notes about a clever little picture by an unknown man, which was hanging near the floor (*The Story,* p.127).

Here, Mary is figured as a professional through the care she takes in evaluating each picture and her attention to detail, aided by her training at the Academy. Rather than being the subject of the public gaze, as when her name appears on a poster, in this passage, it is Mary's gaze that penetrates the art of others, as she becomes critic and judge.

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[26] Fehlbaum, *Ella Hepworth Dixon*, p.84.

Like George Eliot, Mary is a journalist who dreams of novel writing. More specifically, she dreams of writing a realist novel that will explore the sorrows of women caused by the sexual double standard of the nineteenth century, like the sorrows of 'No. 27'. On seeing a 'tawdry looking girl' in a park (who turns out to be 'No. 27'), Mary imagines that her story would be a 'masterpiece', and indeed, in *The Story of a Modern Woman,* the story of 'No. 27' is told (*The Story,* p.106). The unflinching portrayal of the sexual double standard is one of the characteristics of New Woman fiction: as Mary implies when she claims that '[i]t is because they suffer so that women have written supremely good fiction' (*The Story,* p.106).

Much of what George Eliot, Charlotte Yonge and Florence Marryat were concerned with was the value of their literature as art within a framework of criticism that increasingly aligned the feminine with low art. Dixon, like many New Woman novelists, was concerned in her fiction with 'contemporary debates about the relationship of women and "the feminine" to the commercialization of art in a mass culture'.[27] As Randolph and Shaw note, the New Woman novelist faced the same problem as those writing at mid-century due to the 'perceived feminization of literature by cultural commentators who saw women and the "woman question" as invading and corrupting the literary market [involving] an association between "woman", the masses and "low' culture".[28] Indeed, Andrea Huyssen points out that critical rhetoric at the turn of the century 'consistently and obsessively genders mass culture and the masses as feminine, while high culture […] traditionally remains the privileged realm of male activities'.[29] Dixon 'actively participated in the discussion', publishing a piece in 1895 called 'The Place of Realism in Fiction', in which she

[27] Lyn Pykett, 'Representations of the Artist as a Young Woman', in Thompson (ed.), *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question,* p.145.
[28] Randolph and Shaw, *New Women Writers,* p.22.
[29] Huyssen, *After the Great Divide,* p.47.

hoped to demonstrate that 'it [i.e. realism in fiction] was not merely of concern for male writers'.[30] Like George Eliot, Dixon believed that realism committed 'the artist [to] paint what lies before him'.[31] She also attempted, in *The Story of a Modern Woman*, to move the debate on realism away from the gender divide through the character of Perry Jackson, a male artist who, after years of trying, is accepted into the Academy, despite his commitment to art as a consumer product: 'All I want to do', he unapologetically tells Mary 'is to make the thing pay' (*The Story,* p.135).

Despite her initial dreams of writing a realist novel about 'No. 27', Mary finds herself trapped within the feminised genre of romance when her editor tells her that with 'practice' she may be 'able to write stories which other young ladies like to read' (*The Story,* p.108). He continues that she should 'stick to pretty stories. They're bound to pay best' (*The Story,* p.148). Because Mary desperately needs to write what will 'pay best' (for she, like Florence Marryat, has family members dependent on her), she must sacrifice her vision of literature as art which high culture novelists like George Eliot were able to pursue: 'I used to have my little ideas about what was artistic and so on; but then, as you say', she tells Perry Jackson, 'one *must* think of the public' (*The Story,* p.130). So, although the reader knows that Mary's story is worthy of publication (for, as I have mentioned, *The Story of a Modern Woman* tells 'No. 27's' story, even though Mary cannot), she finds it rejected by 'various publishers' because it is 'observed' and 'too sad, "too painful"; it 'wouldn't have pleased the British public' (*The Story,* p.130). Because of this, Mary is forced to write feminine literature that will sell:

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[30] Fehlbaum, *Ella Hepworth Dixon*, p.41. For more on the link between New Women and New Realism of the 1890s, see Molly Youngkin, *Feminist Realism at the Fin de Siécle: The Influence of the Late-Victorian Women's Press on the Development of the Novel* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2007).

[31] Cited in Fehlbaum, *Ella Hepworth Dixon*, p.65.

> 'I have been given a commission to do a three-volume novel on the old lines – a dying man in a hospital and a forged will in the first volume; a ball and a picnic in the second; and an elopement, which must, of course be prevented at the last moment. […] I can't afford to say no. I've got a big brother going to Oxford in a year or two. And grown-up brothers are so expensive' (*The Story,* p.130).

What Mary describes in this passage is the popular novel of the mid-century, something that Charlotte Yonge (without the elopement) or Florence Marryat (with perhaps more than one elopement) would have written. In this satirising of the *fin-de-siècle* literary market, Dixon's narrative echoes George Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891).[32] As Steve Farmer notes, Mary's editors 'are very much in control of her'; they 'callously censor her writing, reprimand her for bringing realism into her stories, and demand that her work conform'.[33]

Although Mary eventually renounces all hopes for high art, the novel emphasises her hard work and training, like the other women writers discussed in this thesis. During her brief engagement, marriage appears to threaten Mary's prospects for work very briefly, but then is quickly dispelled when Mary's lover abandons her to marry an heiress. The difficulty of playing the roles of wife and worker is a theme that recurs in the novels of Eliot, Yonge and Marryat, and this is also the case in *The Story of a Modern Woman*. As has often been noted, the 'attitude of New Women to marriage was complex and ambivalent'.[34] Emma Liggins has noted that Mary ultimately rejects 'marriage and sex [her lover attempts to seduce her after he is married] in order to forge ahead with her career'.[35] Indeed, Dixon commented on the difficulty of managing marriage and work in 'Why Women are Ceasing to Marry' (1899):

> the disadvantages of marriage to a woman with a profession are more obvious than to a man, and it is just this question of maternity, with all its duties and

[32] Ledger, *The New Woman,* p.159.
[33] Farmer, 'Introduction', in Dixon, *The Story of a Modern Woman,* p.30.
[34] Randolph and Shaw, *New Women Writers*, p.12.
[35] Liggins, *George Gissing,* p.95.

> responsibilities, which is, no doubt, occasionally the cause of many women forswearing the privileges of the married state.[36]

Like Charlotte Yonge and Florence Marryat in particular, it is motherhood, rather than wifehood, that Dixon represents as most challenging to the woman who wishes to work. The 'drudgery' of young children is figured as a significant drain on the artist's energies: 'worn-out garments, perpetual alphabets, children always whining, and [a husband] always irritated, thinking her remiss' (*Dynevor,* p.358). Within this context, it is perhaps no wonder that so many women figured their writing as a creative act akin to procreation: nurturing a 'cherished child of her brain' comes to either replace or complement nurturing a baby (*Rational,* p.31). Yet despite the fact that Mary writes articles and novels (rather than raising children), reviewers approved of her as a suitably feminine and womanly heroine. Rather than the usual 'self-assertive, heartless, sexless things' of the New Woman novel, Mary was regarded as a 'gentle and essentially feminine creature, who only took to journalism and a solitary life in London lodgings owing to the stress of outward circumstances after the death of her father'.[37] Like Ermine Williams in Yonge's *The Clever Woman of the Family,* the motivation of the woman artist was important here; Mary was approved of because she, like Ermine, appeared to have 'no inward "call" to forsake home ties and duties in order to lead a higher life and to get her own way'.[38]

John Sutherland has called *The Story of a Modern Woman* 'painfully autobiographical', and indeed it is tempting to read the novel in this way.[39] Dixon's father, like Mary's, died suddenly when she was in her early twenties, meaning that she too turned to painting and literature in order to earn a living. Dixon's father was well respected, like Mary's, and this fact helped to ease Dixon's entrance into the

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[36] Cited in Liggins, *George Gissing,* p.95.
[37] [Anonymous], *Athenaeum* (16 June 1894), p.770, cited in Fehlbaum, *Ella Hepworth Dixon*, p.129.
[38] [Anonymous], *Athenaeum*, p.770, cited in Fehlbaum, *Ella Hepworth Dixon*, p.129.
[39] John Sutherland, *The Longman Companion to Victorian Fiction* (Essex: Longman, 1988), p.190.

literary world. Finally, like Mary, Dixon was a journalist and novelist who never married. Yet, as Lyn Pykett has noted, Mary's very negative experience of painting and literature does not reflect Dixon's successful career. In *As I Knew Them: Sketches of People I Have Met on the Way*, Dixon described how her first editor, Edmund Yates, 'was most kind to [her] youthful efforts' because he had 'been an old friend of my people'.[40] She described being at the centre of various literary parties and gatherings in which she enjoyed the company of many renowned authors. More importantly, Dixon was able to write a realist novel about the sufferings of the woman artist, and the woman trapped by the sexual double standard, an opportunity completely denied to her heroine Mary.

At the beginning of *The Story of a Modern Woman,* Mary stands by her father's grave in Highgate Cemetery. She tells her brother: 'there's London! We're going to make it listen to us, you and I. We're not going to be afraid of it – just because it's big, and brutal, and strong' (*The Story,* p.48). It is a note of optimism that is not sustained by the rest of the novel for, in the closing chapter, an exhausted and disillusioned Mary returns to the same spot to stare bleakly out at the city that she had once thought she could conquer:

> Standing alone there on the heights, she made a feint as if to grasp the city spread out before her, but the movement ended in a vain gesture, and the radiance of her face was blotted out as she began to plod homeward in the twilight of the suburban road (*The Story,* p.192).

It is, as Pykett has pointed out, an incredibly pessimistic vision of the heroine's future.[41] Ledger agrees, pointing out that by this point in the narrative, Mary's 'optimism and confidence have wilted'.[42] Yet, as Ledger notes, London is still 'stretched out at her feet', a positioning that suggests a level of command that Mary did not experience at the start. In other words, through her hard work and

[40] Dixon, *As I Knew Them*, p.67
[41] Pykett, *The Improper Feminine,* p.190.
[42] Ledger, *The New Woman,* p.162.

determination, Mary has achieved an elevated position by the end of the novel. This point is an apt one to end on, for it implies that the severe effort, hard work and resilience of women writers such as George Eliot, Charlotte Yonge and Florence Marryat, created a path for other women writers to follow and benefit from, in which they were able to negotiate a professional identity successfully despite the continued challenges of the literary marketplace.

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